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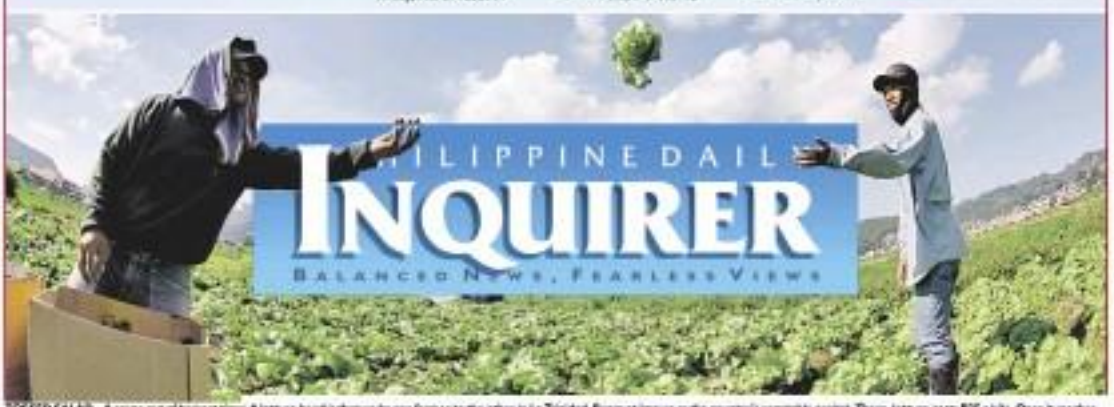

TOSSED SALAD A scene out of harvest time: A lettuce head is thrown by one farmer to the other in La Trinidad, Benguet known as the country's vegetable capital. There, lettuce costs P25 a kilo. Once it reaches Manila, a kilo jumps to P100 due to packaging, transportation and often rapacious middlemen. [redacted]

Lakas open to Teodoro

2010 race too close to call, says Pulse poll

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SCHEDuled for May 2010 is anybody's game, according to a survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

Had the election been held last month, it would have been a "very close race" among four likely candidates—Vice President Noli de Castro, Sen. Francis Escudero, former President Joseph Estrada and Sen. Manuel Villar.

A Pulse Asia survey in February found "nearly the same overall voter preferences" for De Castro (19 percent), Escudero (17 percent), Estrada (16 percent) and Villar (15 percent).

Sen. Loren Legarda also scored a double-digit overall voter preference at 12 percent.

Others included in the survey who obtained single-digit overall voter preferences were Senators Mar Roxas II (8 percent) and Panfilo Lacson (6 percent), Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (2 percent) and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando (1 percent).

"But while Filipinos continue to be divided in their choice for the country's next president, virtually all of them have a favored presidential candidate, with less than 1 in 10 (4 percent) not expressing support for any of the nine individuals included in this survey's presidential probe," Pulse Asia said in a statement released yesterday.

The survey noted that across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes, Escudero was the preferred presidential candidate in Metro Manila (27 percent) and among Class ABC respondents (23 percent), while Villar had an "edge" in the Visayas (28 percent).

In Mindanao and among Class E respondents, De Castro (24 percent and 19 percent, respectively) and Estrada (25 percent and 20 percent, respectively) enjoyed "almost the same level" of electoral support.

SEE PAGE A-10

Defense secretary the 'dark horse?'

By Michael Lim Ubac

DEFENSE SECRETARY Gilbert Teodoro can be the "dark horse" on the ruling Lakas-CMD party's short list of presidential aspirants, Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said yesterday.

Reacting to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's favorable endorsement of Teodoro's candidacy, Zubiri told reporters that Teodoro was a "welcome addition" to the party's stable of president aspirants.

Zubiri is the secretary general of Lakas, which is chaired by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The ruling party's short list include Vice President Noli de Castro, and Senators Manuel Villar, Loren Legarda and Richard Gordon, according to Zubiri.

The other day, Teodoro, a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) founded by his uncle, Sen Miguel Elsie Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, announced that he would run for president in 2010.

But the otherwise low-key Teodoro had acknowledged that getting the endorsement of Ms Arroyo and the ruling party was crucial to his bid.

Zubiri described the US-educated defense secretary as

LAKAS/A11

World Bank: Evidence in documents

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE OMBUDSMAN MAY protest the "confidentiality" of the World Bank's evidence in the alleged rigged bidding of its road projects in the country, but according to the lending institution's representative, the evidence needed to jump-start an inquiry can already be found in the bidding documents.

Bert Hofman, World Bank country director for the Philippines, yesterday said the bank's Department of Institutional In-

WORLD BANK/A10

Pinays beat men in math, says US study

By Miko Maniego

WHEN IT COMES TO CRUNCHing numbers, count on Filipino girls to do better than boys.

Female second-year high school students consistently outperformed their male counterparts in mathematics, according to two surveys conducted by a US government agency.

Citing the findings of the

PINAYS/A11

POOR BILLIONAIRES

Bill Gates is Forbes richest man again; Henry Sy, Lucio Tan climb up the list

NEW YORK—MICROSOFT founder Bill Gates is the richest man again, overtaking investor Warren Buffett, as the global financial meltdown wiped out $2 trillion from the net worth of the world's billionaires, Forbes Magazine said on Wednesday.

The number of billionaires in the world fell by nearly a third to 793 in the past year, with large numbers dropping off the list in Russia, India and Turkey.

The Philippines' two wealthiest men—mall magnate Henry Sy and tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan—and their families climbed up the ladder of the world's richest.

With their net worth swelling to $2.7 billion, the Sys now rank 234th on the Forbes list, compared to their ranking of 841rd last year.

Tan and his family, with a net worth of $1.4 billion, or $100 million less than what they were worth in 2008, rank 522nd on the latest Forbes list. They were in 780th place last year.

Gates regained his title as

BILL GATES/A10

BILL GATES Back at No. 1, edging out partner Warren Buffet.

HENRY SY Mall magnate is No. 234 with net worth of $2.7 billion

LUCIO TAN Cigarette tycoon is No. 522 with net worth of $1.4 billion

Drug lord makes it to tycoons' list

MEXICO CITY—WHO SAYS CRIME DOESN'T pay?

A suspected drug lord, who in Mexico's most wanted fugitive and blamed for thousands of deaths in a drug war, has made the Forbes list of billionaires with a fortune described as "well made."

The magazine on Wednesday estimated Joaquin ("El Chapo" or "Shorty") Guzman's worth at $1 billion—No. 701 on the list, right between a Swiss oil trading tycoon and a US chemical heir. Dozens of other people were

FORTUNE/A10

NO. 701: "Self-made" drug lord, "El Chapo"

Get Ochoco, ex-soldier urges gov't

By Nikko Dizon

BRING BACK "WARLOCK."

He can possibly unlock the mystery of the brutes behind the assassination of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

That's the feeling of the soldiers who have been freed after President Macapagal-Arroyo issued an executive clemency and commuted their double life sentences for the killings of Aquino and his framed-up assassin Rolando Galman.

Warlock is the radio call sign of Col. Romeo Ochoco, deputy chief of the elite Antiriots Security Command (Avsecom) when Aquino was murdered on Aug. 21, 1983, on his return from three years of self-exile in the United States.

GET OCHOCO/A11

Abu leader denies demanding ₱50-M ransom

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Correspondent
and John S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

THE BANDIT COMMANDER holding the three kidnapped aid workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) yesterday denied having demanded ransom of P50 million and insisted that negotiations for the captives' freedom could begin only with a military pullout from the mountains of Indanan, Sulu.

Albader Parad, the Abu Sayyaf commander holding Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba, Swiss Andreas Notter and Italian Eugenio Vagni, also maintained that since Jan. 15 when the captives were taken at gunpoint near the Sulu capitol, his group had neither made any ransom demand nor negotiated with anyone.

"Many have tried to talk with us, and have called, but we have not mentioned any ransom. We repeat: No military pullout, no negotiations. Why can't they heed that condition?" Parad said on the phone, speaking in Filipino.

Parad was reacting to the latest report quoting Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) secretary general Abdul Sabiri that the Abu Sayyaf had demanded P50 million "pangigopiyo" (cigarette money).

Sabiri claimed to have heard the information during a crisis

ABU LEADER/A10

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P6B in Legacy claims 'doubtful'

PRESIDENT Arroyo signs into law the adoption law as Senators Miguel Zubiri and Jamby Madrigal and Reps. Amelita Villarosa and Marlan Dellomas look on.

Law makes adoption easier

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo yesterday signed into law a measure transferring from the courts to the executive branch the responsibility for declaring a child legally free for adoption, thereby shortening the period in which this could take place.

The President signed Republic Act No. 9523 in Malacañang, in simple ceremonies witnessed by some of the principal and co-authors of the measure.

The law, which transfers from the family courts to the Department of Social Welfare and Development the job of certifying a child legally available for adoption, also provides for shorter and simplified procedures.

"With the law, the six-month period defined in Presidential Decree 603, or the Child and Youth Welfare Code, before a child may be considered abandoned will be shortened to three months," said Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal, chair of the committee on youth, women and family relations, who came to the vote, hailed RA 9523 as a landmark law.

"Every child has a right to a family. Let us not deny them that by removing legal hindrance," she said.

Under RA 9523, a child-caring agency can file a petition with a regional DSWD office declaring an abandoned child legally available for adoption. The petition would then be forwarded to the social welfare secretary.

The secretary will review the petition, and based on its merits, shall issue a certification declaring the child legally available for adoption.

By Michelle V. Remo

SOME P6.05 BILLION WORTH of deposit claims on the shuttered Legacy group of rural banks are "doubtful" or even fictitious, according to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

The doubtful accounts comprise 4% percent of the 97.4 billion worth of combined deposits that the Legacy banks claimed to have outlasted before they were closed down last December, PDIC President Jose Magnaye Jr. told a press conference yesterday.

The PDIC, the same entity that guarantees all bank deposits up to P250,000, acts as receiver of the shuttered Legacy banks, handling the disposition of assets and payment of depositor claims.

Magnaye said the doubtful accounts will be further evaluated by the PDIC legal team, a lengthy process as the PDIC is exercising utmost caution in the validation of all deposit claims.

Answerable to COA

The agency is aware it would be answerable to the Commission on Audit and to the general public if it settles deposit claims that turned out to be fictitious, he said.

"This will take time, but we have to do this to separate the victims from the perpetrators so that we can protect the victims and bring the perpetrators to justice," Magnaye said.

Since the PDIC started settling deposit claims that passed the validation process, the agency has so far paid out P130.5 million claims. Another P90.5 million is ready for the claimants depositors have proven their claim.

All the claims that have been settled and validated belong to small depositors, or those with deposits of P100,000 or below. The PDIC has been prioritizing the settlement of small depositors' claims, Magnaye said.

According to PDIC general counsel Romeo Mendoza, deposit claims considered doubtful by the PDIC are those without supporting documents, or those found to be proceeds from fictitious loans or fraudulent money-making activities.

"Depositors are questionable if there is no evidence to show that there are actual bank inflows and if the depositor is potentially non-existent," Mendoza said.

Magnaye said a possible explanation for why deposit claims have incomplete or no supporting documents is that they are fictitious.

He called on the officers of the Legacy banks to turn over all the supporting documents in their possession so the deposit claims can be processed properly.

Fictitious loans

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has filed two cases of syndicated estafa against Celso de los Angeles, the Legacy group chairman and owner, and against the officials of the group and its affiliated banks.

The BSP alleged that the respondents had enticed people into depositing their money with the Legacy banks by offering above-market interest rates, and then siphoning off the deposits for their personal use.

Days ago, of supervising all the deposits in by making fictitious bank applications. Legacy officials would allegedly use fabricated loan applications, approve them and then siphon off the proceeds.

Last December, 12 rural banks under the Legacy group were placed under PDIC receivership for engaging in unsafe and unsound banking practices and after they failed to survive rehabilitation.

Another Legacy-owned bank was closed on January last. PDIC is currently processing deposit claims only of the Legacy banks closed in December. *With a report from Zarlla E. Salinawin*

Owner's son snared in Legacy web

By Michelle V. Remo

A SON OF CELSO DE LOS ANGELES Jr. has been snared in the ever-widening legal tangle of the Legacy group.

The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) yesterday said that it filed a case of syndicated estafa on March 11 against Martin Hendrick de los Angeles, the elder De los Angeles and 119 other officers and employees of the Legacy group.

The respondents are accused of siphoning off P114.85 million in deposits from the rural bank of Carmen in Cebu, a bank owned by the group, for their own use.

According to the complaint, the respondents removed the deposits from RB Carmen through fictitious loans. They allegedly made up false loan applications, approved the applications, and then took the proceeds.

To keep the fictitious loans from the books of RB Carmen, Celso de los Angeles himself bought the loans using 6% fictitious inkwells in Pakistan, Cayos and payments.

To further keep regulators from noticing the fictitious loans, RB Carmen, under the island for P12 million to a company called EDIFICE Realty and Development Corp.

But EDIFICE Realty is effectively owned by De los Angeles himself through a complicated web of cross-ownership, according to the PDIC, citing records from Ocwinvestors and Embargo Commission.

EDIFICE Realty is 99 percent owned by Ocwinvestors Providers and Manpower Services, with the other one percent owned by Celso Angeles and his family.

Meanwhile, Ocwinvestors Providers and Manpower Services is 99.99-percent owned by De los Angeles and 1.06 percent owned by Martin Hendrick.

To justify pay for the island that it bought, EDIFICE Realty "borrowed" from a financial company named Prince Capital Corp., which turned out to be also owned by De los Angeles.

EDIFICE used five real properties in Batangas as collateral. But the properties turned out to be owned by other people, who denied having disposed of the properties.

PDIC President Jose Magnaye said the RB Carmen case was just the first of a series of complaints that the PDIC intends to file against Legacy group.

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Retired but not off the hook

HE SAYS HE RETIRED, BUT HE'S NOT YET off the hook.

Malacañang yesterday said it had every intention of going after retired SEC Commissioner Jesse Mortimer who is alleged to have accepted gifts from three disbanded pyramid firms of the notorious Legacy Group.

"The commissioner is not yet off the hook, that is the same message here," said deputy presidential spokesperson Anthony Golez.

"The President is relentless in her fight against bandits in our bureaucracy," Golez said.

Mortimer retired yesterday after completing his seven-year term of duty as the Securities and Exchange Commissioner.

His retirement has been marred by several allegations that he may have pocketed the Legacy group of companies in exchange for a P5-million house and lot in Pembarque and P1.4 million cash.

Government sources said Malacañang was planning to appoint Deputy Executive Secretary Manuel Gaite to the SEC seat vacated by Mortimer.

Gaite noted that Mortimer was now the subject of parallel investigations by the Department of Justice, Ombudsman, and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission.

Mortimer cannot also leave the country because of a hold-departure order issued by the Bureau of Immigration.

The PAGC on Tuesday initiated a formal investigation by having the case docketed, an important step to make sure that it could still go after Mortimer within a year from his retirement.

"Don't worry because they are doing everything they can to expedite [the investigation] without neglecting due process," said Golez of the PAGC probers.

According to PAGC Chair Constancio de Guzman, the agency received a key document that was enough to initiate the investigation.

Christine F. Esguerra

Jinggoy on Dacer slay: Our conscience is clear

By Michael Lim Ubac

FOR ONCE, THE camp of deposed President Joseph Estrada is not crying politics over an arrest order set on it Makasiang more against their leader and his then police chief over the Dacer-Corbo Lacuna—the kidnapping and murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

At a press conference yesterday, Senator-President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada said he believed the effort to implicate his father, who was president when the abduction and killing happened in late 2000, was not caused by politics.

"I don't think it has anything to do with politics. We have nothing to hide," said Estrada, who was asked to comment on the homecoming soon of Gen. Marcos, a close aide of Lacuna in the Philippine National Police and Presidential Security Command. Gen. Eduardo Kuma (Ret.) and who was one of those charged in the double murder.

'Let's just wait'

"Let's just wait for him (Kuma), particularly former President Ang (Estrada), how nothing to do with the abduction and killing of Bubby Dacer and Emmanuel Corbito," the senator said.

Estrada made the comments a day after Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the government was merely helping the courts bring Mijares home from the United States, where he executed an affidavit identifying the masterminds and perpetrators of the abduction and double murder.

The affidavit is in the custody of Ambassador Rauf Gonzales, who planned it to a bank vault for safekeeping.

Ermita had said the main concern is if the government was due legal procedures were followed to Mijares's removal from the US.

No shortcuts

"We just have to follow the rules of law. We cannot go on with shortcuts," Ermita said.

Mijares, however, is due back in Manila to give media after he decided not to contest his extradition to US federal court.

Gonzalez on Tuesday said the statement of the affidavit would be revealed when Mijares returns.

Yesterday Senator Estrada said, "We're confident that nothing in the affidavit will link our father—and we really don't have anything to do with it. It's not in our character, we don't have a record of ordering killings."

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Gov't to help troubled RP family

By Cynthia D. Balana

AN OFFENSES FILIPINO-WOMEN And his wife who are not only facing a deportation order in Japan but who could also be forced to have their 13-year-old daughter behind have been accused of help from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) which has closely followed their ordeal.

"The DFA and other concerned agencies are ready to extend humanitarian and other assistance to Arlan Calderon, Imelda Sarah and daughter Noriko, including their repatriation into Philippine soil, in compliance with the wishes of the presiding judge(s) in Japan with respect to that country's implementation of its law," Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Esteban Conejos Jr. in a statement yesterday.

"The DFA is closely monitoring the case of the Calderon family. The Philippine embassy in Tokyo is in touch with the family on the matter of their residency status," he added.

Calderon, 36, a demolition worker living in Fukuoka, Kumamoto Prefecture, arrived in Japan using a fake passport in 2001. Upon his arrival, he learned Japanese, did dirty and dangerous jobs, such as asbestos removal, and worked almost extremely at night.

MORIKO CALDERON (right) and her mother Sarah

His wife Sarah, 38, whom he married in Japan, was arrested in July 2008 for staying in Japan illegally. According to reports, while Sarah was in custody, Calderon took his daughter Noriko with him every time he had to work, sleeping in his car so he would not abandon his job.

After the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau ordered their deportation in November 2008, Calderon's co-workers rallied around him, collecting more than 10,000 signatures for a petition calling on the Ministry of Justice to give the family special permission to stay in Japan.

Calderon's plea to have the deportation order cancelled was later rejected.

When Calderon visited the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau on Feb. 10, he was told that either his family had to go or he could leave Noriko behind. Last week, Calderon was arrested after the deadline for his departure lapsed. With AFP

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It's business as usual despite DPWH shooting

By Kristine L. Alave

THE SHOOTING by unidentified gunmen of a senior official of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) just outside his office did not deprived the agency from continuing to serve the public, the DPWH said yesterday.

Although the entire department was placed under tight security a day after Undersecretary Rizalino Aquino and two others were shot as they were leaving the DPWH General Office in Bel Aire, Manila on Wednesday afternoon, it was "business as usual" for the employees and officials of the agency, DPWH Undersecretary Rafael Tuble said yesterday.

"The instructions of Secretary [Hermogenes] Ebdane was that it should be business as usual here at the department and that the outlook on Usec. Aquino should not affect our performance, that is [so] we should double our efforts in our work," Tuble told reporters.

Aquino, who serves as Ebdane's chief of staff and is in charge of DPWH projects for Central Luzon, was shot by two unidentified men armed with hand guns as his vehicle was about to enter the Bonifacio Drive around 3:30 p.m. Aquino, his bodyguard and the car's driver survived the ordeal by not sustained bullet wounds.

What said that he and other DPWH officials would not let any action behind the ambush. "I was the last person Usec. Aquino talked to before he left for his meeting last Wednesday. He never mentioned any threat against him," he said.

Undersecretary Manuel Bonoan said Usec. Aquino was not involved in the controversies that recently rocked the department.

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Manansala art to fund education for the poor

THE CENTER OF Excellence for Public Elementary Education is offering National Artist Vicente Manansala's 1970 "Mother and Child" as its 2009 centerpiece piece to mark 10 years of providing quality education to underprivileged children. Gutter, an Ayala civic project, has so far assisted 1,419 pupils in Gen. Tinio and Gen. Bonifacio. It provides cafeteria-related essentials and meals, believing that a healthy child performs better.

Carol Araneta, Center director, said in a press statement that the Manansala masterpiece was chosen because "the mother's embrace says it all: love and protection for the child, and a dream for her best possible future. Center puts this message into practice, believing that education empowers and liberates the underprivileged child, and is a proven social equalizer and key to success."

The original painting was shared with Center by Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Lopez. A paper print will also be produced.

'HARMONIZING BANGSAMORO POSITIONS'

MILF, MNLF in talks, says Moro leader

By Kristine L. Alave

THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), two secessionist groups that have resumed their peace negotiations with the government, are in "serious talks" to "harmonize" their positions on the Bangsamoro problem.

MNLF chair Muslimin Sema, who is the mayor of Cotabato City, said combining the positions of the two organizations could result in a blueprint for solving the Bangsamoro problem, which is threatening to radicalize Muslim Mindanao.

"We want to harmonize our positions. We had established some kind of understanding in 2001 in Kuala Lumpur. So there's a continuing rapport on our part," Sema said.

The last time MNLF and MILF leaders discussed a bright chapter of peace was a united front won in June 2008, although officials of the two groups are in frequent communication, Sema said.

Saving face

"We have proposed it to the OIC[-]IPHC [Inter-Committee for the Philippines] chair and the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference]... harmonizing the solutions to the Moro problem. Perhaps that will help save the faces of the Philippine government and the MILF," Sema said.

Negotiations between the government and MILF were shelved last year after a memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA) in the two days were set to sign were broken from various stakeholders and was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

The MOA, which recognized the ancestral territory of the Bangsamoro people, would have expanded the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). It also would have given greater political power to local Muslim leaders.

The MILF leadership thought of abandoning the peace talks but, Sema said, the MNLF advised them to stay on track.

Sema said the MNLF was revisiting its 23-year-old peace accord with the government in order to ensure its implementation, as a stipulation condemned with the OIC currently going on.

The government and MNLF signed a peace accord in 1996 that paved the way for the creation of the ARMM.

No change

Sema said the MNLF was disappointed over the government's refusal to implement the peace agreement fully, which would have brought development to the ARMM, the poorest region in the country.

"If you look at the situation in the ARMM today, there's no change. There's poverty, virtually no delivery of basic services, there are kidnappings," Sema said.

The MNLF chair said they wanted the accord to work and bring peace to Mindanao. He noted that younger Muslims impatient to see progress in the region may resort to violence.

"We will wait as long as we can. But if we can't endure it anymore, the others might take up arms. That is the worst that could happen. The people will be radicalized and the separatist and armed struggle will be revived," Sema said.

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Recruiters of hijacked RP seamen in hot water

By Cynthia D. Rubinos

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO YESTERDAY ordered Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to suspend or suspend the license of the manning agency which recruited the 23 Filipino seafarers still being held hostage by Somali pirates.

The seafarers are crewmembers of M/T Sirius Strength, a time-charter ship hijacked on Nov. 11 in the Gulf of Aden.

"I asked POEA Chief Jennifer Manalili to require [Sea Cap Shipping Inc., fixed manning agency] and Regatos Shipping Inc. [principal] are doing everything to bring our Filipino seamen safely back home. Should such efforts be found insufficient to assure the safety of any OFWs, I want the licenses of these companies revoked," De Castro said.

"Unless Sea Cap Shipping Inc. and Regatos Shipping Inc., have secured the safe release of the 23 crew members, their continued entertainment of seafarers will pose a danger to our countrymen who may be needlessly exposed to such threat when their manning agencies are unable to provide ample protection," he added.

De Castro noted that all other manning agencies and their principals have secured the safe release of their crewmen who have been hijacked in Somalia.

M/T Sirius Strength is flagged in the Philippines, managed by Bhadra's Victoria Ship Managements, and on a long-term charter to Sirius Shipping.

The Vice President said he was surprised that the M/T Sirius Strength incident has remained unresolved despite the fact that it was one of the earliest incidents of hijacking.

The impoverished country of Somalia has not had a functioning government since 1991 and foreign vessels are frequently seized for ransom by pirates armed with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and automatic weapons, making it difficult and expensive to deliver aid to the region.

In June, the UN Security Council voted to allow international warships to enter Somali waters to combat the pirates. But the 1,000-mile coastline—the longest in Africa—remains virtually unpoliced.

Manila has implemented the double hazard pay scheme for Filipino seamen who will be sailing through the Gulf of Aden, which was declared by the POEA as a "risk zone."

Filipino seafarers were also given the options of whether or not to continue with their respective ship's voyage or to disembark in a safe port if the vessel will pass through the Gulf of Aden.

The Philippines supplies a third of all of the world's sailors. The 270,000 Filipino seamen operate everywhere, manning major oil tankers, luxury liners and passenger vessels and exposing them to pirate attacks in dangerous regions.

Ople Center notes rise in trafficking

THE BIAS E OPLE OPOS POLICY Center has warned of an increase in welfare cases involving human trafficking victims abroad unless various government agencies and the media put up a united front against the trafficking of women and children.

As a recent focus of the Lingayan Bridgeway in Pasay, Executive Labor undersecretary Susan I. Ople, now president of the BMI Policy Center, said trafficking syndicates have become more aggressive in efforts to lure more victims to exploitative work abroad.

Ople, daughter of Sen. Blas Ople, daughter of the former senator and labor secretary, recommends teams at the local communities particularly to share areas and remote barangays where jobless Filipinos are easy prey.

"More has to be done to stop human trafficking syndicates from infiltrating our households," the OFW advocate said. Prevention efforts are vital because once the trafficked victims leave the country, they would be at the mercy of the syndicate and foreign exploiters.

War vs human trafficking

"Their passports and mobile phones will be confiscated and all the promised benefits shall turn to dust. Our embassy or consulate abroad must seek the help of non-country volunteers and the police of the host country to rescue trafficked victims. This takes a great deal of time, effort and resources. And so, in the war against human trafficking, prevention is really important," Ople said.

She cited gains by the Bureau of Immigration on the prevention side of the campaign against illegal recruitment and human trafficking as a positive sign that reforms are underway in the agency.

"The immigration agents serve as the people's screen against illegal aliens and to prevent trafficked victims from leaving the country. It is critically important that they carry out this mandate with pride, integrity and honor. Otherwise, unscrupulous recruiters and trafficking traffickers will continue to deploy more victims," she said.

Airport screening of OFWs backed

PLACEMENT AGENCIES HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR support for the ongoing campaign of the Bureau of Immigration (BI) to rescuing victims of illegal recruiters and human traffickers by preventing their departure from the country.

Lito Soriano, executive director of the Federated Association of Manpower Exporters and former president of the Philippine Association of Service Exporters Inc. (PASEI), said legitimate recruiters are solidly behind the bureau's drive to ensure that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are properly documented before leaving the country.

Soriano said the bureau's strict implementation of the law on the departure of undocumented OFWs "sends a strong signal to illegal recruiters and human traffickers that they can no longer ply their nefarious activities with impunity."

Soriano also said that the call for investigations in the Senate of the alleged extortion by immigration and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) personnel at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport has received mixed feelings from the overseas placement industry.

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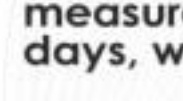

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Tony Santos; 77

FORMER ZAMBOANGA CITY businessman and model aircraft hobbyist Antonio "Tony" Santos died at the Zamboanga Doctors' Hospital yesterday. He was 77.

He is the father of Sammy Santos, a veteran Manila journalist who is now Press Media Director of the Philippine Senate, and David Santos, comic artist of 666-Comics Zamboanga Barons. Tony Santos was the proprietor of the House of Hobbies, a leading toy store in Zamboanga City in the 1970s.

He is survived by his wife, Mercedes Fernandez Teodoro and Rosalie, children Rose, Sonny and Julie, Marianito and Jojo, Christine and Dodong, Nicholas and Vicky, and David, nephews, nieces and grandchildren.

His remains lie at the La Memorial Memorial Homes in Barangay Sta. Maria, Zamboanga City.

Interment will be announced later.

The Daily Gospel

Friday, March 13, 2009
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Gen 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a
Gospel: Mt 21:33-43, 45-46

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders, "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a hole for the winepress, built a watchtower, leased the vineyard to tenants and then went to a distant country. When harvest time drew near, the landowner sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the harvest. But the tenants seized his servants, beat one, killed another and stoned another.

Again the owner sent other servants, but they were treated in the same way.

Finally, he sent his son, thinking: 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they thought: 'This is the one who is to inherit the vineyard. Let us kill him and his inheritance will be ours.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Now, when will the owner of the vineyard do with the tenants when he comes?" They said to him, "He will bring them to an evil end, and lease the vineyard to others who will pay him at harvest time."

And Jesus replied, "Have you never read what the Scriptures say? 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and we marvel at it.' Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of heaven will be taken from you and given to a people who will yield a harvest."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they realized that Jesus was referring to them. They would have arrested him, but they were afraid of the crowd who regarded him as a prophet.

Commentary

What Jesus was saying should also be a cautionary tale to anyone, today, who makes a habit of enjoying the privileges that go with the physical Church. Let us call ourselves whether we, as a people, who own the vineyard and will of its advantages, do we serve both in the prayers?

Jesus shows us a different way to be. Our thinking and talking and worship of Jesus cannot take place in exile from life outside. Rather, it takes place within the context of the Church, past and present, and in the public sphere of the unresolved struggle world, into which Jesus plunged. By the time of the Gospel writers, the Church's institutions had grown to a point a lot place and time in their century Palestine. Mt came and spoke Jesus and included an all in the family. New century folk, knitted in Jesus' fellowship and know they had been with Jesus. May it be so with us!

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Underground river losing steam in poll

THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT IS URGING Filipinos to vote for the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River in the New Seven Wonders of the World contest after Palawan's premier tourist attraction fell from the top spot in the second round of voting.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano issued the call on Wednesday after it was revealed that the underground river system was dislodged from first place by South America's Amazon river.

"Once again we urge Filipinos from all over the world to keep their eye on the prize. All the voting and support have already generated immense publicity for our country. It would indeed be a feat for the Philippines if the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River becomes one of the 7 phenomenal sights in the world," Durano said in a statement.

He said the river park's participation in the contest would be an enormous boost to the tourism industry.

Largest underground river

With an 8.2 kilometers of navigable waters, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River Network is said to be the largest underground river in the world.

The river flows through 8.2 kilometers of a stunning landscape of limestone karst, stalactites and stalagmites and emerges from a cave mouth into the South China Sea. The mouth of the cave is a bustling ecosystem which is home to monkeys, large monitor lizards and squirrels.

The underground river is also included in the Unesco's World Heritage List of national and cultural sites and properties considered as having universal value.

The tourism department said Internet-savvy Filipinos can put the Puerto Princesa underground river back on top by voting for it on the www.new7wonders.com.

The underground river is competing to be forests, natural parks and nature reserves category in the ongoing global search for the new seven wonders of the world.

Online voting for nominees will continue through July. A panel of experts will review the top 77 nominees and choose the 21 finalists to be announced on July 21. — Pierre L. Alava

Batangas Review Center Successful on its First Attempt

Batangas Review Center, the first licensure review center in Batangas City, is proud to have produced 387 successful board passers in the November 2008 Philippine Licensure Examination for Nurses. The review center, opened last year by University of Batangas, the first and biggest university in Batangas Province, was designed to help nursing graduates by equipping them with necessary information and training prior to taking the board examination. Nursing graduates need not go out of Batangas just to search for a review center that can effectively train them.

Batangas Review Center has partnered with Center for Excellence in Nursing Education (CENE) for nursing review, and is very proud that two of its reviewees placed 8th (Ms. Hazel Joy Briones, 87.2%) and 10th (Mr. Angelo S. Plata, 85.80%) in said exam.

With the review center's first major accomplishment, Dean Henry Cabatac - Director, extends his congratulations to all the board passers. Currently, Batangas Review Center is accepting enrollees for the nursing review that will start on April 01, 2009.

Hazel Joy Briones
8th place

Angelo S. Plata
10th place

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TOP TEN (from left): Cadets Cacanindin, Manicdo, Flores, Limlengo, Mayao, Maldoorang Sumiago, Ramos, Porreas and Dapaloc

PMA topnotchers were tops in HS, too

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—THE graduating cadets of Philippine Military Academy "Sinaglahi" Class of 2009 have been academic achievers in the unexpected when they enter the real world.

That's because 7/3 of the 184-strong class topped their respective high schools' honor lists, while many others have excelled in their universities before they were eventually to join the academy, said their tactical Leonardo Calderon, PMA superintendent.

Calderon officially introduced the top 10 cadets of Sinaglahi Class, who will be commissioned as officers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines by President Macapagal-Arroyo on March 14. Sinaglahi stands for Matatag (strong), Sigasig (zeal), Lakas.

Cadet First Class Karl Whitney Cacanindin of Aurora topped the class, and would be joining the Philippine Air Force. The next in rank are Cadets First Class Lorenzo Whatmore Manicdo of Tarlac (second); Roger Flores of Iloilo City (third); Nelson Liwanag of Siargao (fourth); Larry Mayao of Bontoc, Mt. Province (fifth).

New standard

Erick Ryan Maldoorang of Iloilo, Cagayan (sixth); Carlito Santiago of Isabela (seventh); Glenn de Ramos of Davao City (eighth); Cyrille Sutosa of Dinalungan, Pangasinan (ninth); and Christopher Ian Dapaloc of Dubai (10th).

The superintendent said the cadets were ranked according to PMA's new standard as basis top: leadership criteria. "We are trying to engaged the youth to join the PMA," he said because of the academy's new role.

The top 10 cadets wrote down their own biographies, and a few of them admitted aspiring for career in law and politics.

Cadet Limlengo wrote that he "dreams to be a lawyer [and not] a soldier [one did I plan] to enter the PMA."

Alfado designed a life that is beyond our knowledge is famous," he added, to describe why he pursued a military career.

Motivation to excel

Almost all of the top cadets referred to their family lives as their motivation to excel.

"Actually, pursuing PMA had been my father's dream, even when I was still a child," Cadet Cacanindin said.

Cadet Sorrainos, the lone female cadet among the topnotchers, said she was graduating as a legacy soldier. She said her grandfather is retired Air Force Gen. Amadeo Perlainos, and her uncle, Jony serves the Philippine Air Force as a colonel.

Sorrainos said she has dedicated her achievements to her father, who died in a car crash in March last year. "I feel so blessed and honored as my female as redeployed. Here is a female who still made the top 10. Proof na kaya ng female na magsucat sa male dominated world. It's proof that the female can excel in a male-dominated world," she said.

"To everything you do, just give your best. Kahit women enjoy [from if we are women] we are given equal opportunities," she added.

Sinaglahi cadets is back next to a career in the military, she said.

"I do not have much in life. I do not have a fancy car and I do [] wear fancy clothes. But I know that life has much to offer and I am here to cultivate myself," she wrote in her personal essay. *Vincent Cabreza and Elmer Kristian Dangin, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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11th Philippine Quality Award Forum

19 March 2009, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Grand Ballroom, The Heritage Hotel Manila, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

"Harnessing Our Competitiveness Amidst the Current Global Economic Crisis"

PROGRAM

08:00 – 09:00 AM Registration
09:00 – 09:15 Opening Ceremonies
Invocation
HE. REYNALDO E. PALMARES
Trustee, Phil. Quality Award Foundation, Inc.
National Anthem
Opening Message
ARIS TOSAR B. BAUTISTA
Co-Chair, Private Sector
National Competitiveness Council
09:15 – 09:45 Networking Break
09:45 – 10:00 Presentation: AIAPI Asia Inc.
10:00 – 12:00 2007 PQA Recognition for Commitment to Quality Management
HE. ULDARICO V. BRIZUELA
Chairman & CEO
Presentation: Sutherland Global Services
2008 PQA Recognition for Commitment to Quality Management
HE. CRAIG BAUWENS
Vice President and Country Manager
Lunch
12:00 – 01:00 PM Presentation: First Philippine Industrial Corporation
01:00 – 02:00 2008 PQA Recognition for Proficiency in Quality Management
HE. LEONCIO U. GARDE
President and CEO
02:00 – 03:00 Presentation: United Laboratories, Inc.
2008 Philippine Quality Award for Performance Excellence
MS. ORELIA H. CONTENO
Senior Vice President for Human Resource and Organization Development
03:00 – 03:15 Networking Break
03:15 – 04:15 Open Forum / Panel Discussion
04:15 – 04:30 Integration / Closing

Organizing Agencies:
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
Philippine Quality Award Foundation, Inc. (PQAF)
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Philippine Quality and Productivity Movement (PQPM)

For further details, contact us at:
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Telephone: (02) 899-6167 / 751-3380 / 751-0384 loc. 2134
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UNITED LABORATORIES, INC. (UNILAB)
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Senior Vice President for Human Resource and Organization Development: Ms. Imelda H. Contreno

United Laboratories, Inc. (UNILAB) is the first company to be a recipient of the Philippine Quality Award for Performance Excellence (PQA). The company is a 100% Filipino-owned private organization with a strong presence in the Asian region developing, manufacturing and marketing a wide range of Consumer and Pharmaceutical products.

To provide the best quality and affordable healthcare to Asia, the company recognizes the value of having the finest talents in its 3,000 strong workforce, making them the foundation of UNILAB business.

The unique principles that set Unilab apart - QUALITY, AFFORDABILITY, SERVICE TO COMMUNITY and THE BAYANIHAN SPIRIT - help ensure that UNILAB remains synonymous in the Philippines to Trusted Quality Healthcare.

First Philippine Industrial Corporation (FPIC)
2008 Recipient of Recognition for Proficiency in Quality Management

President & CEO: Mr. Leoncio U. Garde

First Philippine Industrial Corporation (FPIC) is a joint venture of First Philippine Holdings Corporation (50%) and Shell Petroleum Company Limited of the United Kingdom (40%) transporting more than 100 billion liters of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, fuel oil, and other petroleum products through a pipeline system from refineries to depots. It provides the safest, most reliable, and most economical bulk fuel transport contributing to nation building and sustainable development.

FPIC's Management System is certified to six (6) international standards: ISO 9000, Quality of Service; ISO 14001, Environmental-friendly cleaning; OHSAS 18001, Health and Safety in the Workplace; SA 8000, Decent Working Conditions for employees including suppliers and sub-suppliers; ISO 27001, Security of Information and Investors in People. FPIC continuously updates its technology through international partnerships and collaboration with its communities and other stakeholders to ensure responsible operation.

SUTHERLAND GLOBAL SERVICES

Sutherland Global Services (2008 Recipient of Recognition for Commitment to Quality Management

Vice President / Country Manager: Mr. Craig Bauwens

Sutherland Global Services is a multinational IT-Enabled and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) company specializing in customer management and back-office services for Fortune 1000 clients. Established in 1996 in Rochester, New York, it now employs over 21,000 professionals offering round-the-clock, blended services from its delivery centers in the United States, India, Canada, Philippines, Mexico and Eastern Europe.

The Philippine operations began in 2004 with a mere 120 employees. Today, the Sutherland geographic has grown to over 7,000 employees and is still growing across five locations, namely, Makati, Clark, Davao City, Camarines Sur and Cebu City. The Company provides BPO services to world-renowned companies in telecommunications and high-technology banking and finance, software, e-retail, ISP and travel reservations industries.

In every engagement, Sutherland develops a deep understanding of the client's existing processes and technology, working from being just a provider of outsourcing services into a strategic partner in success.

AIRLIFT ASIA INC.
AirlIft Asia Inc. (AAI) 2007 Recipient of Recognition for Commitment to Quality Management

Chairman & CEO: Mr. Uldarico V. Brizuela

AirlIft Asia Inc. (AAI) is a 38 year-old Filipino corporation, certified to ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System and TAPA "A" for security. AAI has four (4) major services, namely: (a) international and domestic freight forwarding; (b) customs brokerage; (c) warehousing; and (d) Express Mail Service (EMS). It has a branch office in Cebu City that caters to the requirements of customers in Visayas and Mindanao. AAI has set-up various satellite offices in Roxas and Dasmariñas, Cavite, Clark, Pampanga, Subic and Batino, Calamba, Laguna and in South San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

AAI has been consistently rated as the highest performing logistics solutions providers in the Philippines. In the recently concluded 9th Bonar Cargo Carriers, Inc. (BCCI) Industry Awards, AAI was named as the "Best Cargo Forwarder of the Year 2008" after sweeping all the four major awards in the Platinum category, namely Freight Management, Information Technology and Communications, Infrastructure, Logistics and Warehousing Management and Transport Network and Equipment Management.

Through AAI's customer-focused leadership system guided by the Strategic Management Process (SMP) done annually, the management and employees are guided towards the attainment of its vision of becoming the number one total logistics Filipino company.

United Laboratories, Inc. (UNILAB)

First Philippine Industrial Corporation (FPIC)

Sutherland Global Services

AirlIft Asia Inc. (AAI)

INFOBOARD

Smart Communications Inc. has been tapped by the Department of Tourism to provide a customized wireless communications solution that would help it invest its programs in Region XI. Part of the solution is the kiosk/board, a web-based, fully customizable communication technology offered only by Smart. It will enable DOT Region XI to collect, manage and promote tourism- and travel-related information on Davao, and make it available to the public with a few clicks on a mobile phone. In photo, Smart chief wireless advisor Orlando B. Vea (2nd from left) presents the symbolic customized Smart GIN to DOT Region XI Director Costa Garcia (right) seeking assets (from left) Smart Wireless Consumer Division head Claudio J. Mejia, Davao del Norte Gov. Rodolfo P. Del Rosario, and Davao Regional Tourism Council Chair Alma L. Ilay.

Health experts warn: Pay attention to your kidneys

By Dona Z. Pazalogon

HEALTH EXPERTS ARE URGING PEOPLE to be more alert to signs of chronic kidney disease, stressing that it is often misdiagnosed until it is too late.

According to Dr. Agnes Mejia, a kidney and hypertension specialist and chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital, the common warning signs of a kidney problem are high blood pressure and protein in the urine as manifested by "bubbles."

"If your blood pressure is 140/90, be suspicious. If your urine looks like San Miguel beer with lots of bubbles on top, that's not normal," Mejia said in a news conference arranged by Novartis pharmaceutical company to observance of World Kidney Day yesterday.

Getting out of bed a few times at night to urinate was not normal, she added.

She said inexpensive laboratory tests for creatinine (a blood test) and albuminuria (a urine test) were good indicators of a kidney problem.

Mejia said people should also look into their family's medical history for hypertension, diabetes, stroke, gout and, of course, kidney disease.

"So be aware, be suspicious and see the doctor, don't delay," she said.

Once a person's kidneys are damaged, the only option in prolong life is by chronic dialysis or kidney transplant.

"So if you want to be serious on World Kidney Day, prevention is the key... Performing blood pressure and protein in the urine or 'bubbles' in the urine are two key factors in preventing kidney disease," Mejia said.

Dr. Rudy Ily, a UP College of Medicine professor and past president of the Philippine Heart Association, said people with hypertension should not take their condition lightly.

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NATIONWIDE SCHOOL SURVEY

Most kids have poor oral hygiene

By Philip C. Tubeza

WARNING THAT POOR ORAL HYGIENE adversely affected a student's performance, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus Wednesday released the results of a nationwide survey that showed 97 percent of 6-year-old and 82 percent of 12-year-old pupils suffered from tooth decay.

Lapus said the Nationwide Oral Health Survey (NOHS), conducted between November 2008 and February 2009 in the 17 regions of the country, also found that 12-year-old students had bleeding gums "and/or cavities which is caused by lack of oral hygiene habits, specifically lack of regular tooth brushing."

"We should do something together to address what seems to be a small problem but in reality can affect the future of some 12 million elementary schoolchildren," Lapus said.

The survey covered 2,000 six-year-old (usually in Grade 1) and 2,000 12-year-olds (generally in Grade 6) and was comprised of a clinical exam and sociological survey.

The children were chosen because, at the age of 6, their primary teeth "start to exfoliate and the history of dental experience during preschool childhood time can be seen."

By the age of 12, most children would have lost all their primary teeth and the full set of permanent teeth (except for wisdom teeth) would have grown in.

Lapus said the results showed the 6-year-olds had an average 3.4 teeth where the decay had reached the pulp, causing complications like "swelling and pain, difficulty eating, sleeping and concentrating on learning."

Twenty percent of the 6-year-olds reported having a problem in their mouth when they were interviewed, the survey said.

For the 12-year-olds, the mean number of "decayed, missed or filled permanent teeth) was 2.9. On average, one of the decayed teeth developed "caries progression into the pulp (with resulting infections."

"On gingival health, only 26 percent of the 12-year-olds presented sound gums. Seventy-four percent had bleeding gums and/or calculus," Lapus said.

Lapus said children with severe dental decay (caries progression into the pulp) had significantly lower body mass index (BMI) and the proportion of children suffering pain was 2½ times higher in this group compared to children without severe dental decay.

One of the survey findings, however, offered hope as it showed the school was the best place to institutionalize healthy habits, Lapus said.

Some pilot studies carried out in the country showed that implementing school-based daily fluoride tooth brushing could reduce new dental caries by 48 percent and oral infections (Ritchie and others) by 66 percent, he said.

TODAY, THE **BIGGEST UNIVERSITY** IN CENTRAL LUZON WILL HONOR ONE DISTINGUISHED **KAPAMPANGAN** WHOSE ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, SPORTS AND THE ARTS HAVE IMPROVED THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF FILIPINOS AND REDEFINED CULTURE ITSELF.

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Nominations now open for UP Gawad Plaridel for 2009

THE UP COLLEGE OF Mass Communication (UP CMC) is now accepting nominations for the UP Gawad Plaridel which recognizes Filipino media practitioners who have excelled in any of the following genres: radio, film, television, and new media and have performed with the greatest level of professional integrity in the interest of public service.

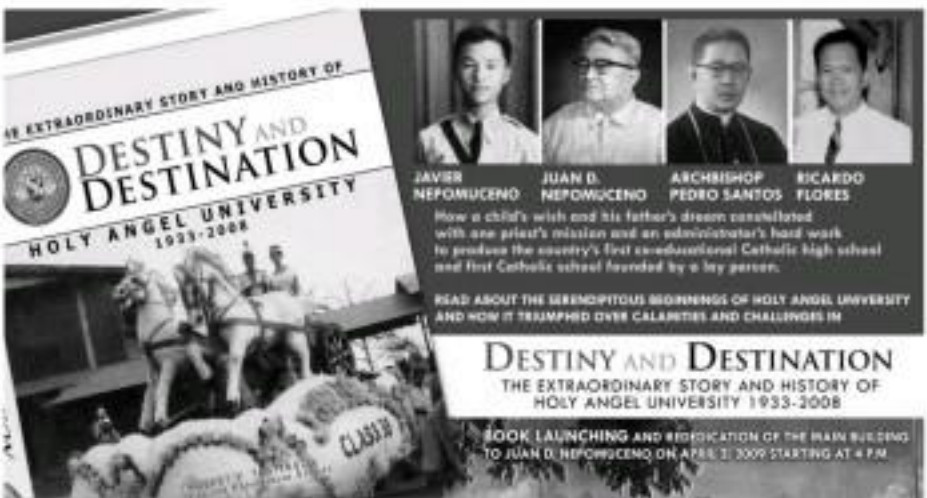
For 2009, the ninth UP Gawad Plaridel will be given to an outstanding Independent Film Practitioner.

The award is named after Marcelo H. del Pilar (nom de plume, Plaridel), the selfless propagandist whose determination of the colonial mentality Jose Rizal initiated helped crystallize nationalist sentiments and ignite libertarian ideas in the 1890s. Like Plaridel, the awardee must be dedicated to the cause of a Filipino society that is egalitarian, participative and progressive; and in media that are socially responsible, ethical and vigilant, libertarian and nonalarmist, and free and independent.

Eligible for the awards are all living Filipino individuals who have excelled in the field of independent filmmaking in producing, directing, scriptwriting, musical scoring, etc. Aside from their produc- tions, these media practitioners must have produced a body of work that is marked by excellence and social relevance and must have achieved, recognized nationally and/or internationally.

Individuals and institutions may nominate potential awardees. Institutions include media corporations, professional media associations, media advocacy groups, educational institutions, cultural foundations, and NGOs. Previous nominees may still be considered for this year's award.

Deadline for nomination is on opening of the UP Gawad Plaridel session/exhibit on March 31. The awardee will be announced on April 4.



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OPINION

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Getting worse

EDITORIAL

IT IS WORSE THAN WE FEARED, ACCORDING TO the Asian Development Bank, the global financial crisis has erased some $50 trillion from the value of financial assets in 2008. The estimate is the key finding of a commissioned study that calculated the fall in the value of financial assets in currency, equity and bond markets worldwide. "This is by far the most serious crisis to hit the world economy since the Great Depression," said ADB president Haruhiko Kuroda.

The Philippine economy, in some ways protected from the contagion because it is not yet fully integrated into the world economy, is expected to bear the full brunt of the crisis only later this year. The news from the export front, however, is downright chilling.

Year on year, exports last January fell a disconcerting 41 percent. This is the second straight 40 percent year-on-year drop. December 2008 exports were down 43.6 percent from December 2007. The global economic slowdown brought worse news, the National Statistics Office said. Electronics, which accounts for over half of the country's exports, fell 48.4 percent versus a year ago—to its lowest level in 11 years. It is worse than we all feared.

"We are all Keynesians now," US President Richard Nixon famously said, over three decades ago. It is safe to say that if there were some doubts then, there are hardly any now. Today, almost all economists agree that some form of government stimulus spending is needed to arrest the momentum of the crisis. The question is how much.

The International Monetary Fund has asked governments to allocate 2 percent of GDP for fiscal stimulus programs this year and next. It is a level US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner finds "reasonable"—and this weekend he will call on the so-called Group of 20 nations to "commit substantial and sustained actions" to contain the crisis and jump-start economic recovery. But Geithner's remarks more influential boss, US President Barack Obama, has already signed a massive spending bill into law and launched an enormous rescue of a first budget rescue—and yet the markets in the United States and in other developed economies remain decidedly earthbound. It is worse than we—all of us—feared.

It is a truth often told that companies who advertise during an economic downturn reap benefits during the recovery out of proportion to their spending; they gain not only from their increase but from their competitors's absence. And yet, here in the Philippines and throughout the world, companies are slowing down spending on advertising—thus hastening the downward spiral of consumption, in a true vicious cycle.

Have the agents of stimulus, the prophets of expenditure, lost their nerve? Perhaps it really is worse than we all feared.

The famous economist Amartya Sen, writing in the New York Review of Books, sums up the situation we have dug ourselves into: "The present economic crisis is partly presented by a huge overestimation of the wisdom of market processes, and the crisis is now being exacerbated by anxiety and lack of trust in the financial market and in businesses in general—responses that have been evident in the market sentiments in the sequence of stimulus plans."

In other words, that Keynesian kick in the pants is mighty long in coming.

Sen, who won the Nobel Prize in economics in 1998, suggests we need to reconvene, not only with the ghost of John Maynard Keynes, but also with the more obscure specter of Adam Smith.

"Pigou was much more concerned than Keynes with economic psychology and the ways it could influence business cycles and slumps and hinder an economic recession that could take us toward a depression (as indeed we are seeing now)."

Even more urgent than a crash course in economic psychology, however, we need a Pigou for his work on recessionary inequality—a daily fact for more and more victims of the crisis.

Sen again: "Since the suffering of the most deprived people in each economy—and in the world—demands the most urgent attentions, the role of supposedly competitions between business and government cannot stop only with curtailed by coordinated expansion of an economy. There is a critical need for paying special attention to the underdogs of society in planning a response to the current crisis, and in going beyond minimum to produce general economic expansion."

There is a greater urgency now, not only to stimulate spending, but to care for those the crisis has left undone. It is worse than we feared.

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Dirty tricks of competitors in fertilizer industry

AS PREDICTED, WE ARE GETTING SCRUTCH Agricultural Products Corp., the right of reply on an abuse do. Sodium Ltd has been accused by farmers of selling fertilizer that is below standards and specifications. A laboratory analysis by the Bureau of Soils seems to confirm this. We asked Sudbuck and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap to comment on this. Sudbuck was to reply the other day. Here reply will be sent and column.

Here's Sudbuck's reply:

"Please allow us to debunk all the allegations made by a columnist in your column of March 9, 2009, in which the columnist alleged to be very below specifications and may below what the product declared."

"First of all, you have been grossly misinformed by the so-called complainant. He seems that the alleged packers were also reported by China. We have not imported in 8-P or 14-14-14 fertilizer from China for the past seven years.

"However, the alleged complaint had stated to identified one brand (SWELL), a locally manufactured product accredited to us, as the fertilizer brand for product. This is totally untrue.

"Sudbuck Agricultural Products Corp produces and distributes 16-P and 18-P-K under the (SURE brand. For the past 20 years, we have been the trusted leader in terms of market share and sales in Luzon. We take exception to allegations that SURE products are of inferior quality, efficiency and integrity.

"We have checked some of the points raised in your column, specifically the so-called tests conducted by the Bureau of Soils which were supported allegedly by farmers. The facts are different as revealed that the so-called complainant filed by a certain Commercio Cabana from Marikina City are those still farmlands in Marikina City to justify such a complaint! There being none, what then was the intention behind? Could it be that he is a competitor's commissioned company and products?

"A summary of facts will show the following:

• He have not imported any 8-P or 14-P-K fertilizer products from China for the past seven years.

• Chemicals and permits for the past 10 years on all SURE products have been issued by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), which is tasked to monitor the quality of all fertilizer and other fertilizer products complied with all regulations of the government.

• The FPA, not the Bureau of Soils, is the government agency that oversees and regulates the fertilizer industry in the country. Fertilizer use, efficiency and quality are closely FPA functions, while soil analysis and fertilizer recommendations are the concern of the Bureau of Soils.

• The Bureau of Soils' so-called tests that were used to pass samples are subsidiary and not at all specific in nature. It could have sometimes any person claiming to be a farmer whose answer is questionable. We also take issue with the procedure for sampling which clearly showed that it was not properly observed and conducted. The so-called evidence or materials brought to the Bureau of Soils for testing were inadequate and outdated plastic bags which would show that it could have been adulterated because our fertilizer comes in 50-kg sacks that are properly sealed. In addition, such tests conducted is not mentioned location in Ilfeld Manila over a hundred miles away from where we did proof of use of our fertilizer brand, a questionable.

• The (SURE brand of fertilizers is market leader in Luzon for years now is the best proof of product quality, efficacy and benefit. A non-performing fertilizer product would be immediately rejected by farmers and would not last long. Our product farmer and market leadership through the years clearly prove the superiority of the (SURE brand.

We appreciate the concern you expressed in your column and are grateful of the fertilizer you want not quick to pass judgment on us. We hope that this clarification can finally explain that the allegations made by the complaint is your column not baseless.

"We appeal to your sense of justice, fairness and objectivity which are the cardinal driving points in your columns. We are confident that you will give us the opportunity to reply to the allegations made against our company and our products.

"Thank you very much.

"(SIGNED)

"Marketing Manager (NAME)

"Sudbuck Agricultural Products Corp."

* * *

We inquired about the fertilizer industry from those in the know. We learned that there are about 10 companies selling fertilizer in the Philippines and that competition is very fierce. There being a fertilizer glut. Sudbuck is the oldest biggest and dominates the Luzon market, especially Northern Luzon, where it has its factory (in Bacnotan, La Union).

Sudbuck's fertilizer is priced lower than those of other brands which are imported. The importers were caught by the increase in petroleum products. Imagine fertilizer is petroleum-based and when the price of oil skyrocketed, the price of fertilizer also skyrocketed. When the price of oil fell, the fertilizer importers were caught with high-priced imports and cannot compete with locally produced fertilizer. They can lower their prices to compete but they refuse to take the loss.

So, is the Bureau of Soils harassing and reporting now have thought of trying to sabotage the reputation of Sudbuck's (SURE brand of fertilizer. Sudbuck's owners also told me that in the past, trucks were found mixed with fertilizer inside bags of (SURE, obviously to sabotage their product.

Competition is good in a free market. It keeps prices down. But dirty tricks are also a bane of competition. Competitors and government regulators should watch against this and punish those guilty of it.

Philippine tourism: One bright exception

PASSION FOR REASON

René C. Bungubungan

THIS WEEK AND I WROTE THAT THE "GOVernment's tourism program is one bright exception to the somber mood of the times," and lauded the many initiatives to attract more tourists to our shores. Last week, while searching for my belated article at the Spa after trip to Bacolandia, I had a chance to linger at the airport and read those cover to cover the brochures and maps and what-not welcome our visitors.

The good news is, first, that there are brochures at all—four of them, to be exact, all of them glossy, informative and professionally written, with high quality graphics. I have visited many of the featured destinations, and I find that the photos are taken effectively and accurately in the incoming guests.

Overall, these compare well with the tourist brochures of nearby destinations in Asia. It will be difficult to compete with native shelves of literature at the Hong Kong airport, such items geared to a specific market, like the Chinese (Mainland)—the shoppers, the food-lovers, the adventure-seekers, the museum-crawl, etc. It makes sense for Hong Kong to invest in these materials given the high volumes of tourist traffic that it enjoys (this is why Mega Manila's tourism campaigners should be in Bangkok, and I can say that our government-sponsored ads are better, but perhaps this is where we can learn a strategic thing or two from our neighbors.

One, the government should support the private sector and get competent staff. In Bangkok, I didn't see all having sent much government-sponsored informational material, but I do recall that the map I held had lots of advertising. In the Philippines, one of the unfulfilled promises had been to ensure that the ads as well as supports by publications are supported by the telecommunications fund. We should have more of this sort of partnering between government and the private sector.

We (the tourists) can take advantage, the pool of consumer data and calculate what we can put together quality glossies for our local attractions. At the same time, government steps into a minute, a gap, in the service chain, because many who use entrepreneurial enough to venture into home-based tourism rarely have the savvy to sell themselves. Some channel agencies supply a surprised as they get free advertising from a visitor who blogged glowingly about them. In contrast, the government takes pride in the Roll-On, Roll-Off inter-island ferries, but when I actually planned to vacation in Puerto Galera, I couldn't find out trip schedules!

There is evident some room operations in the provinces, and they complain that often the government's idea of helping local tourism is taking over the route itself. That doesn't help because the government, instead of being a partner of local business, actually becomes its competitor. There, it's a competition with an unfair advantage consisting, most of all, of hidden subsidies funded from fees in the Cebu and gifted to foreign and rich local tourists.

Government support can come in other ways, involving the infrastructure for delivery, convenient airports, access roads, sewage collection and disposal, reliable police. The improved highways to Northern Luzon have reduced the Baguio-Clark to less than five hours' travel time, and I hope that the government will focus on the west and Bataan next on the east. Contrast that to the terrible experience of Boracay. Already faced by tourists on tourist management, the scandalous behavior of the Boracay police demonstrated the headlines for a while, when there should take over the humiliation to the part of a local politician's kin.

On the other hand, there is one role for which government seems to distantly suited, namely, spotting and discovering new tourist destinations. Boracay, Sagada and now the surfing destination of Siargao, but how can we have the foresight to discover a destination before someone else discovering them? Let us leave the drama to their paper pushing, but if you ask me where is the next Boracay, I would say, "Turn to the young adventurers, they who roam the roads of our islands, the wind on their backs and sun in their faces."

Second, we must enable more tourists to leave Manila and fly directly to their chosen tourist spot. Before the tourists are immigration gates and would delight in seeing the "Spelling Bee" of Cebu Pacific, Zest Air, Air Philippines, Asian Spirit and Philippine Airlines flying straight to Boracay, Palawan or Bicolano. Manila is an additional three-hour leg of air travel for overseas visitors, and we must help the tourist economy. The authorities either to make good on the "Open Skies" policy and fill the market with more flights, or to have traffic priorities (air-agencies who will fill in the gaps.

Third, perhaps it's time to divert our market deliberately to family reunions, adventure tourists, or spa and medical tourists. Why assume that all our foreign visitors are big spenders who will stay at the star hotels all the way? Perhaps we are too self-unable to backpackers and budget travelers, and it is time to reach out to different kinds of tourists and offer them a wider range of options. Cebu Pacific has already shown the way and has embraced the budget travelers with great success. (And in a flight magazine is of good quality, in contrast to a near-sillier tabloid magazine has replaced the Philippine Airlines' in-flight magazine.)

Finally, perhaps a change of attitude is needed. The Filipino must not see the foreign tourist as a fare for the quick buck, but rather as a long-term investment to be nurtured, whose goodwill should produce dividends in terms of word-of-mouth, word-of-blog advertising.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

The rise and fall of the hemline

ANALYSIS

Amanda Gorman

THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS, NOW LIKENED by the International Monetary Fund to the Great Depression, has been blamed for a great shift in the fashion world: the plunge of the women's hemline.

Beyond this, a noted demographer has said in a speech to Melbourne, there is "great historical shift" working also amid the recession, reviving theories on the link between fashion and severe economic circumstances. The most famous of these theories was advanced by US economist and psychologist Wilson Brewer Cronk in 1926, who posited that women's hemlines rose in good times and fell in bad. Do you see the similarities?

There are other theories associated with bad economic times. Hypotonic cars that more accurately the US chair of Sonic Lauder argued that lipstick sales rose in a recession, the sophistical being that "when someone cannot afford spending money on big-ticket fashion items they indulge themselves in a range of lipsticks." This theory also recalls confirmation from impressionistic observation.

Another recession myth is under the spotlight. Picking for the Australian newspaper, Bali says that in the 1990s recession, the Japanese government created a report that Japanese social researchers had found "a positive correlation between youngsters' hairstyles and economic performance." Be that as it may.

The logic is that when women can't spend money on clothes, they choose a hairstyle that offers greater scope for variety and you can do much more with short hair than long hair. The point is that there is no expenditure that accompanies short hairstyles, which are therefore a better fit for a recession. There is a different psychology for consumers behaviour in a recession than I think would very much play out in the fashion business.

Studying the connection found the Sydney judge it's not quite as sound this notion of the individuality of no celebrity.

"The reason is that in a boom we are confident in who we are, in our responsibility, and perhaps even in our desirability. In a consequence, we look for fashion that enables us to stand out in the world."

Designs and designers quickly evolved during the boom to emphasize the quirky and the individualistic. Salt stood.

Regardless of whether business seen us is done in the last 18 months, they certainly shifted form fundamental to damingly angled. Some hemlines were even jagged. I can remember at the time of this Great Hemline Shift being greatly puzzled as to why a woman would have a "delicately-cut-asymmetric."

The deeply infinitesimal answer was that the design had already achieved its end: the women were being noticed. The short apart from the crowd. It could even be argued that the use of gel and hair wax is part of a broader, more complex way to demonstrate the individual, since no two spiked hairdos are exactly the same.

But with the recession comes a different set of driving forces. No longer is there an inherent desire to stand out from the crowd; the driving need is quite the opposite: it is to fit in.

"In a flourishing world we tend to retreat to the safety of the herd, the tribe, the family, the community. How many times have you heard words comparing the word 'safe' during the boom, how often did you hear about the need to celebrate our wonderful individuality?

"In a scary world, those seeking the cure for individuality would be viewed as being a red herring, while mavens in many are becoming."

In another part of the world, in Tasmania, these thoughts of an international community all hooked up to the recession were ushered in a more grim platform. Speaking at an anti-crisis meeting, Bill Monopoly, head of Australian Women Risks Ltd delegates that "The GDP experts' global growth is down below zero this year, the worst performance of our lifetimes." He urged wealthy Western countries to maximize financial support for low-income nations. He warned that "there are now 'it is not but that millions will be thrown back into poverty" across the African continent and that the economic crisis comes "the real threats of civil unrest, perhaps even war."

In whichever case, both agree that if his assessment was correct, the hottest fashion victim of the recession is likely to be those that offer the greatest range of hues on a single theme: some black, brown, grey (or should that be "midnight," "earthy" and "slate").

In Month a few months ago, I observed that the dominant colors of women's dresses were black and white, brown and grey. Could this be a reflection of the grim mood that has engulfed the world and is there more pessimistic?

To such a world, garment creations would seem to signal the quirky and the off beat, but rather it would reinforce the inherent value and strength of conformity," Bali wrote. "It returns to the conservative designs that have been the safest headlines on the other hand, would be different, tuned straight and neatly tucked into their right pockets.

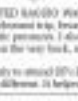
We hope the recession-inspired quest for conformity goes further than the possible use of traditional hues to generate design. ... I believe that tipped and lean jeans have been a powerful symbol of the boom," I noted apart because we have do not conform to ... Perhaps during the recession, designers might depict the individual in new, different styles. The reason is that, in a boom a designer sits in your connection to artist behaviour, whereas in a recession it just looks poor.

"If you put all of this together you have the ingredients for big new trends in behaviour in fashion, with women wearing bright blazers, shiny hats and long straight hemlines in a traditional fashion combined in earthy hues."

Surreal Baguio

THE LAST TIME I VISITED BAGUIO WAS ABOUT THREE years ago. It was not a pleasant trip, because of a combination of work and domestic pressures. I also got caught in an evening thunderstorm on the way back, making the trip all the more harrowing.

Last week's visit, mainly to attend DFA Baguio Consensus Conference, was totally different. It helped having someone



PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

else to drive, but the overall experience was SCTD. Under-Dark-Tudor. Its pioneers also made the trip elusive. You enter in Clark (after the Northern Luzon Expressway) and exit in Tarlac, a rather short stretch but one which allows you to stay several hours than often have traffic bottlenecks.

I was worried that there would be a mad rush of people given that my trip coincided with the tail end of the Brown Festival, but, as we discovered through the course that 200 kilometers. Told travel time, including one hour to get out of Metro Manila and about 45 minutes to a meal stopover, was only four hours—not bad at all, especially when you have young children with you.

With other looks like a long and hot summer upon us, you might want to consider a trip up, especially since it is Baguio's summertime.

But, you might ask, what does Baguio have to offer? Besides, including Baguio residents themselves, complain all the time about how Baguio has deteriorated through the years. Intended as a summer capital for government bureaucrats and a place for rest and relaxation, it subsequently turned into a place where people live, work and study. Even if you emphasize the rest is strictly exists, and you exist the title of a DJ Bisoy song. Baguio's cool climate, scenic spots and economic opportunities have become liabilities, attracting too many people, whether as transients or permanent settlers.

But Baguio continues to attract people, not so much because it has new attractions such as lane but because it's just so different, even surreal. Some of this you already know: the cool climate in what is usually a very hot country; the quaint colonial architecture; the flowers that you don't see back in Manila; the strawberries.

Perhaps the most surreal thing about Baguio is that it's still a relatively small, in the commercial conference, there are two governments from that I particularly enjoyed: one on the polar bears of Bicycle Park by Felix Perez and the other on the Benguet bodies by Alice Bulalio. Both the polar bears and the Benguet bodies have one thing in common: they are both made of wood when the subjects. The Bulalio other's blood says to care for their cattle. The Antolocan materials had grabbed from the lobang lanahan story by another columnist, but the carabao lived on, now no longer limited to the Bodol, but still carrying on the culturally Benguet cultural tradition.

A different kind of surreal experience is the karaoke, which is popular in the Cordillera, especially on Baguio, and figured it was simply the product of an American colonial hangover. Mind you, this isn't just club houses with singers screaming out John Denver songs. I still remember going to a jampacked music hall where people played instrument country music, including the ubiquitous cowboy strutting around with the appropriate boots and hats.

It turns out this country music craze is cued up to the Benguet Bodol. The conference session on the Benguet Bodol was an analogy, and I stated it there even all country music halls. The one I visited some years ago has since been replaced by a bar that plays "acoustic" videoke. Another place, but my Baguio friends said there are still places where country music is played, complete with line dancing.

I didn't have time on this last trip to check up these places, but I did get to check out old haunts (besides haunted hospitals). I used to go to La Azotea on Session Road because of I was a fan of the band Asin, which used to perform there. I also like the place where the master of the ancient, Alexander Bidlet Tabanda, has a corner that combines, in a multi-level layout, a shop, photo gallery, installation art everywhere, and a restaurant.

Here for a magical moment during your visit by the Rains on Chicago Bodol Bodol, a cafe and restaurant, which is famous offering a fusion of traditional Cordillera food. Pinoy spins food, and a bit of something from everywhere. They were making their own honey (you know that you eat the wonderful I was there. They do carry all kinds of alternative punishing from other producers) instead of the usual store-bought jam, you can find leftover (guinumolo) jam, or about August (and others). Weekend evenings they will organize vegetables.

O My Bloss is just across the street from Café, which is where I go for Kalderon cheesecake when I can't get it a pie, but it's really more of a dessertcafe, with graham cracker filling and a thick layer of cheese on top. Kalderon is also one of the best carrot cakes around, is not found at Hanley's, which is no easier for the famous Hanley's vanilla pudding and breadcrumbs, a pastry shop and a restaurant.

Bodol

A few just a few days before my married period down part of the city market but there's still enough of it for the small businesses to be affected by much of the current mess. But I have to say the vendors can be too pushy, always desperate. Do not proceed five before buying: you'll find, for example, that the best vegetables (including best-tasted ones like Chinese parsley) are usually further uphill behind the market.

Baguio, or rather Metro Baguio, does have one new attraction. The Bodol de Museum, which opened just last month. You go north into Bagulbol Road, and right before Corpuscon Mall, you turn into the town of Asin. The museum is on Bodol and has Bodol, Asian flora Dalawa's amazing collection of traditional crafts, as well as his and his friends' artwork. The museum is on a piece of land that also has a garden, farm, and beside-taking vacation at the moment. The grand Bodol Bodol restaurant, Café Bodol, will be built sometime.

Don't rush through the museum. There's enough in there for at least an hour, more if you are into art or anthropology. I had the kids with me and they were quite behaved, dazed as if the artwork had seduced them. They were allowed to roam quite freely, but I still had to caution them not to touch anything.

So there you have a list of reasons Baguio in the 21st century. I'm planning our next trip in May, more leisurely this time, without having to think about photos and homework, unless we are hungry up. We should at least not installed on Leonard Wood and on our last night there, before making our way, possibly via Sumacher and claiming someone was looking to go to Bodol Bodol.

Email: mtan@inquirer.com.ph

Single-issue politics

AT LARGE

Ricardo Saludo

WASHINGTON, D.C.—READ THE STORY AND tell me if you agree, as Canadian newspaper columnist Rick Salutin argued in a recent column: "It's almost like the Church gets off on being misunderstood."

Jacobo tells the story of a 9-year-old girl in Brazil who got pregnant as the result of an alleged rape by her stepfather. The girl was pregnant with twins but had undergone a rape exam. Because doctors concluded that continuing the pregnancy could have killed her. The local Catholic hierarchy tried to stop the procedure (which is allowed in Brazil only in cases of rape or to save the life of the mother). They failed. Instead, in effect, the local archbishop decided to excommunicate the girl's mother and the doctors.

Tellingly, the archbishop didn't excommunicate the stepfather, who is now in custody. While in his defense, he said he was only trying to help the girl by "pure, abortion is the most serious of issues according to the Church," writes Jacobo.

"Mortal sin has no value" when it's contrary to God's law, the archbishop explained.

More controversially, the archbishop said, evil men who are completely out of touch with the harsh realities of people's lives take it upon themselves to take part God's will," comments Jacobo.

The Brazilian archbishop's assertion is echoed in the dominant of public opinion polls that show a majority support for the Reproductive Health (RH) bill now pending before the House and Senate. In an interview with the Philippine Information Agency Fr Amando Alcuin, media coordinator of the Archdiocese of Palo (Leyte), declared that "the majority of the Filipino people could care that they are supporting the RH bill, the truth of the issue is the artificial cannot be changed."

Maybe that's the central problem in the never-ending debate: both sides are talking about separate issues and viewing the controversy through different lenses. Pro-life activists are talking about a piece of legislation that is loaded, overreliance, on statistics that need to be addressed by government action. Opponents, on the other hand, are talking about moral assumptions and assertions, implications of all evidence to the contrary, trumping all talk of statistics by taking sides in the last presidential election. The Church made no secret that it was backing Senator Benigno Aquino III against Gloria Arroyo, who was known as a "proponent" on the issue of abortion, but resisted conservatives by asserting that he was "pro-life." On the day after the inauguration, says a relative, their parish priest took the pulpit and decreed that "his administration the wrong team won in the last elections."

Apparently, majority of American Catholics decided to ignore the hierarchy's position, since President Barack Obama swept not just the Catholic vote but also the Catholic vote. Catholics, but also Catholics, have could echoes, which in the past had led to advocating progressive social issues such as peace, justice and human rights, love nature it so strong" that "it's not the end of the world." It's hard to lose sight of the fact that there are so many other problems confronting the US and the rest of the world today, and that most American Catholics are more concerned on the issue of abortion than the bishops would like to admit.

As it is now, it's up to you to take sides. On the Cato Public Forum interviewed a few days ago that is not withholding a Silver House Council on Women and Gals, chaired by Valerie Jarret, a social worker who has devoted to the problem of domestic violence and rape.

A Washington Post report said the Council will "provide a coordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls to ensure that all cultural and Cabinet-level agencies make decisions that do not and programs impact women and families."

The first one political, as well as personal, reason for such a high-profile effort on behalf of women. Here, Obama is surrounded by women he calls, respects, admires and even owes his job to. He opened it with them in 2008, 53 percent of the electorate was female and Obama carried a significant portion of that demographic. "Obama and his cause know that if he can maintain his 2008 margin among women in his reelection race in three years' time, he will be all but guaranteed," said the Post.

Classroom tools vs content

LOOKING BACK

Soledad S. Reyes

KNOWLEDGE OR ITS FAR SUPERIOR MASQUERADE continues. Suppose has made classroom teaching easier and hopefully more effective. In principle, equipping classrooms with LCD projectors make learning easier, but observing others use Power Point badly led me to write today's column.

Each time I observe children at my college benchmarks in my school, if there is a new, badly executed lesson—most approaching half a century, I refuse to admit how old I am, but nothing could be more unmatch than a student making me feel years ago, about the slide projector I was using up. I was considered innovative with slides as is Power Point overhead projector. In fact, I was also considered "cutting edge" a decade ago is now considered Jurassic.

I marched to PowerPoint three years ago when a succession of teaching assistants—Galileo Jones, Bradley Kusanovic and Dmitri Llanos Dmitri—introduced me to its many charms and the ease of its presentations. Then Sally Adonis of the UP Mass Communication all my slides into digital files and gifted me with my first flash drive. Thus, yet another Internet is unchained into the 21st century.

Coming from the flash ages, I was always impressed by Dmitri slick audio-visual presentations over my simple computer-generated ones that still got many teachers to attend. Gone are the days when someone stands in front and reads the report to everyone. Boring. Others do engaging data, at least a good schedules and his methods.

The real challenge is not giving but the grade but how to make the audience pay attention between good research and good presentation. Data must be gathered and analyzed, and they must be organized and presented in a coherent and engaging way. Many students mistake presentation for content. Good presentation can never result into good research, although it is the other way around: research papers have to narrate you can see the point when you can see organization or the lack of it, the sources have to be acknowledged, and not to footnotes and the bibliography.

Term papers must be like old Gothamed, but it is a disciplined way of presenting or arguing a point. I emphasize "used to be" because I have not made students do it since, but they seem to limit presentation skills. How many times have you been bored by presenters turning their backs on an audience and reading the text on the screen? They even read slowly as if the audience is illiterate. How many times have you encountered presenters who seem to hold the time setting up incompatible equipment only to find it unable a presentation from Power Point does not work? The technology is there to aid, to supplement a presentation. It cannot replace actual presentation.

When I was asked to evaluate a teacher, I dun Power Point because a real teacher only needs a room and a blackboard to make a point.

Two decades ago, as a young teacher, I gave the dean a choice between doing a traditional research paper or making an oral group report before the class. I was amazed to see that the majority chose the latter. Many of them were quite presentable. One group reported on early Filipino revolts against the Spanish, switched off the lights and simulated a battle. In the middle of the screaming and running about, someone threw tubing alcohol to be blackboard and set it on fire. I was not amused to see much. I could smell the smoke there would go all hot my students returned me that alcohol does not produce smoke. I was mesmerized as I watched the blue flame consume both the alcohol and the board. The students obviously knew what they were doing. When the lights came on after the report, I stared blankly at the charred blackboard, and another group seriously used the exposure on my face and reasoned out that it could be fixed. Wielding the eraser, he covered the burned parts of the board, making it look like new. Since then I have never allowed open flame in the room.

Another group reported on pre-Spanish religion. They came in costume and held a funny chicken ritual on early 14th-century true accounts. I nearly fainted as a heavy guy hog in the back of the classroom, so I decided it into the flesh part of the classroom exhausted the show.

Toward the end of the report, I heard someone from the back. Gone there was audience participation, tomatoes had brought in. 19-foot python and used it as a prop. I complimented it to be tested, but they said it was not necessary. The group made around my neck. I don't remember much what was the point of the snake, but it was effective.

We had an early morning class, so I asked the owner of the python how he would deal with "Pete" the python between one class and his next class. "Oh, he's fine. He's cool right now," he said, no problem, sir. I will drop you off, you bring him back home. It's so conditioned! There is food and water and he hog is keep Pete sleepy the rest of the day."

Of course, I didn't report this to the library authorities but I kept worrying that Pete might get bored and decide to eat the hog and regurgitate the Filipino professors. I didn't want to disappoint the cook and disrupt the 4 o'clock class. Since then I have never allowed live animals in classrooms.

Power Point and lectures really deliver training presentations, but if the presenters has nothing to say and wanted to say it, the tools will never replace content and good delivery.

Comments are welcome at ssreyes@pmail.com

Look for new breed of leaders now

LETTERS

THIS REFERS TO THE CALL OF Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, for the search of a "new breed of leaders who will emerge from the upcoming presidential elections in May 2010." (Inquirer, 2/25/09)

This call of Archbishop Lagdameo is very urgent and timely. However, for an ordinary Filipino voters, we cannot wait after the May 2010 elections for these new breed of leaders to emerge. The search, emergence and identification of these leaders should be now.

If we recall, when our country faced a leadership crisis because of the Hak tumo-giray, the late Ferdinand Magsaysay, because of his achievement as a Hak fighter and as an honest and incorruptible politician, was recognized and highlighted before the presidential election in the '50s. As a result, a hamburger's officer was created and his election for president was ensured. Can a similar identification process not be explained at this time? Who will lead?

Given the present situation, this writer doubts if a retired justice with a family to maintain will be willing to serve and spend his retirement funds for the purpose. On the other hand, a recognized church leader would be in a better position to announce this leadership and identification role. He has no family to serve and can therefore concentrate on this particular task of selection. This writer does not mind if the list includes other members of the clergy, if they are allowed to go on leave.

Unless this search and identification process is initiated now by a credible church leader like the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, this vicious cycle where a new group of traditional politicians replaces the old tropos in government, our country will continue to suffer increasing poverty and economic difficulties.

—LAURELINO C. LUMABAS, Block 9 Lot 31 (Phase 1), V.S. Chabolafatan, Tacloban City

Right of reply precept in practice

MY SINCERE AND DEEPEST GRATITUDE to the Inquirer for the space allowed to my reply to news reports about my involvement in the alleged rigging of the bidding for World Bank-funded road projects.

I would like to thank the Inquirer for giving me a chance to explain my side to the spirit of balanced reporting and fairness.

—RICHARTE HIDALGO, former public works secretary

Let's pull up nation with honest deeds

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE letter titled "Legacy loan made fools of Central Bank officials," (Inquirer, 3/1/09).

May I refer the writer to the "Legacy Timeline" which was published in the Jan. 29 issue of the Inquirer. The timeline detailed, among others, that the Legacy rural banks obtained a court order from the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC), restraining the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) "Monetary Board from acting on the findings of the BSP audit and that the SEP appeal was rejected." Then again, the BSP elevated the case to the Court of Appeals which upheld the RTC decisions, "preventing the BSP from closing the rural banks."

Afterwards, the BSP appealed to the Supreme Court, which overturned the appellate court and RTC rulings, allowing regulators to act on the examiners' recommendations." Meanwhile, "one after another, 15 rural banks linked to the Legacy Group ceased operations voluntarily." Clearly the BSP has been doing its work very professionally and diligently but the earlier adverse court rulings prevented the SEP from officially discharging its mandate.

Quite doubtful is the query on the BSP for the overall sizable banking system of the country. And this has been made possible by the dedicated, honest and hard working officials and employees of the institution. The public also needs to be vigilant and cautious by not being easily misled with "get rich quick" financial schemes and advertisements. Nothing beats hard work and prudence.

As we often hear nowadays, if it's too good to be true, then it's not true. Self-discipline should likewise be observed by financial owners and executives; they should not enrich themselves at the expense and misery of many others. Let this lesson season be a reminder for us to reflect on how we ought to be pulling up the nation with our honest deeds.

—JESUS B. ADAMOS, thingamee@yahoo.com

Pension received, 'arrears' still missing

AGAIN IN BEHALF OF MY MOTHER, Mr. Leonor L. Manuigas, I would like to thank the Inquirer for publishing my letter ("Bedridden widow missing pension for 9 months now") in its March 11 issue.

I'm so glad to inform you that on March 5, 2009, I was surprised, but so thankful, to find out that after many long months of waiting, my mother's long-delayed pension was already credited to her SEM account. In this regard, I would like to thank the employees of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office who facilitated the release of my mother's long-delayed pension, which would be of great help in meeting her medical and personal needs.

Again, I would like to request the release of my mother's "old age pension arrears" in the amount of P9,000 to which, according to the PVAO, was released in her (though check last September 2008, before its was late. As the saying goes, "A deal born out of air is air born."

—SILVIA M. CALINGASAN, Barangay Tavian, San Jose, Batangas

Gutierrez the big, fruitless Acacia tree

"WHAT HAS HE DONE?" IN Quirer's Feb. 21 editorial asked, referring to Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, in relation to the corruption scandals that have dogged the Arroyo administration. But after she dared her critics to tell the public what they had done to combat corruption.

"Magsi-ayo!" is my answer.

Gutierrez dare to her critics was, in fact, also an challenge to each and every citizen in the country. But lest she forgets, the Office of the Ombudsman has been flooded with various complaints, many of which are not so prominent as the fertilizer scam, rigged bidding for World Bank-funded projects, road grease ads, etc. Many of the cases involve misfeasance and malfeasance by public officials and have been filed by helpless citizens, including ordinary state workers.

Many of these cases do not prosper, despite sufficient evidence which could prove the guilt of the offenders, because the offenders have money and/or connections in the ombudsman's office itself and in the higher echelons of the equally corrupt Arroyo administration. It is very much convenient for the Office of the Ombudsman to dismiss cases for "lack of merit" or on "technical grounds." Of course, the investigators and the deputies would have a justification for their decisions.

Some are the steps of Simeon Marcelo (Gutierrez's predecessor) when the ombudsman would rule manually deviate from the recommendations of the deputies. Interestingly, whether Gutierrez (Ombudsman), or I, or the Filipino citizens involving Mahatallang allies and cronies, which are either prejudiced or delayed at, or dismissed by, the Office of the Five Gentlemen's "hatchmate," ended up prosecuted, harassed and/or persecuted.

It is Gutierrez's duty to step on/repress in the bud, to prosecute public offenders, to eliminate the bad eggs in government, to act decisively and expeditiously without fear or favor. In this, she has miserably failed.

Ombudsman Gutierrez is just like a huge and leafy acacia tree, standing tall but bearing no fruit.

My apologies to the Acacia tree for the comparison.

—CALIXTO ZEA, Jr., bro_bio@yahoo.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of nurses and physicians by the hospital, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Pasong and Metrocrest Extension, Makati City (Makati) or send a fax to 896-8797, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Across the NATION

Nation Desk: Editor Tony Bergonia

12-year-old girl dies in croc attack

FREE RIDE
Residents enjoy a free ride on a tank as they return home from volunteer work on a road project that they are building with the help of government soldiers. The project is in the remote villages of Pagagao, Lanao del Sur that is believed to be heavily influenced by Moro guerrillas. ROMEO ESTAÑOL/PHILIPPINE INQUIRER

Rare aggression puzzles execs at school in marsh sanctuary

BUTUAN CITY—A 12-YEAR-OLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPIL was killed while two others survived after a crocodile attacked a boat ferrying them in Lake Mihaba, a crocodile sanctuary inside the Agusan Marsh in Buenavista, Agusan del Sur.

It was the first reported crocodile attack against humans within a living zone in the sanctuary, home to two species of fresh water and salt water crocodiles.

Rod Hipolan, administrator of the Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra, a nongovernment organization, which runs the school where the victim studied, identified the fatality as Rowena Romero, a Grade 1 pupil.

Hipolan said Romero and two other classmates were using a boat on their way back home when the incident happened at around 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Hipolan said the crocodile, which he said measured about eight feet long, towed the boat and dragged Romero into the water.

"It was really gruesome, Romero's head was cut off but we are able to retrieve her body found floating in the water the following day," Hipolan told the Inquirer by phone.

The two other pupils survived by swimming for safety.

Hipolan said school officials remain puzzled by the rare and drastic behavioral change of the crocodile, noting that the attack have grown accustomed to human contact with our boys in the area.

"The pupils used the lake as their route going in and out of our school. Maybe, that crocodile was really hungry or pregnant..," he added.

Hipolan said he appeal to the government and crocodile experts to help them capture the crocodile because their classes have been disrupted and the livelihood of villagers who rely on fishing was hurting.

"The kids are afraid to go to school and the villagers who rely on fishing for livelihood are afraid to venture out," he added.

He said many settlers have claimed to have seen the culprit crocodile lounging in the lake, one of the 62 lakes comprising the sprawling Agusan Marsh.

The girl is a member of the ethnic Manobo tribe who live in floating houses in the Agusan Marsh. *Froilán M. Gallogallo, Inquirer Mindanao*

PNP: Marijuana top target in Cordillera

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Whether or not President Macapagal-Arroyo is the country's anti-drug czar, police officials in the Cordillera said they won't abandon their drive to eradicate marijuana in the region.

Chief Supt. Orlando Dwando, Cordillera police director, said the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency would intensify the campaign following the recent spate of arrests involving people transporting marijuana.

He cited the case of 10-marijuana bricks worth P150,750 that were intercepted recently in Barangay Alapang here.

Perrallo said the marijuana problem is now considered as among the three priorities in the PNP's order of battle for the region.

The other two, he said, are the dismantling of private armed groups and the confiscation of unlicensed firearms.

Perrallo said the PNP has already mapped out plans for 2009, a known election double spot, to curb violence there for the 2010 elections, and the deployment of more policemen to destroy marijuana fields in remote villages.

But he said police efforts to end the marijuana trade had nothing to do with Mr Arroyo's boasting to be a drug czar.

He said that if had been the PDEA and the PNP's mission to set their foot on every area planted with marijuana.

The battle cry is to deny the market access to the illegal plant, he said.

Chief Insp. Edgar Apalla, acting PDEA director in the Cordillera, said there was no pressure on the PDEA to exert more effort to stop the trade of illegal drugs and marijuana.

"We have remained dedicated to end the marijuana trade and we will continue to do the same," he said.

Apalla said the region remained to be the country's top marijuana producer.

On Tuesday, Pettit-Local Spillers led the burning of samples of marijuana fields and plants at Camp Bado Dangwa here.

The items were part of the marijuana plants worth P39 million that the police destroyed in Ifugao town recently. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

NBI takes DNA samples on Antique girl's case

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has taken DNA samples from members of the family of the murdered 14-year-old girl in Antique and her male companion to help in the agency's investigation of her death.

NBI investigating agent Arnold Ona said in an interview on Wednesday that the samples from the parents of Rinnie Mejica and from her 16-year-old companion would be compared to samples taken from the victim's remains.

The NBI also requested the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to allow them to take samples from the self-confessed 16-year-old suspect. The suspect, being a minor, is under the protective custody of the DSWD.

Ona said the DNA samples would be compared in the accused Raul Jakain Jean, the victim's live-in partner, and Rinnie's mother, Rosalie Mejica.

The DNA analysis is used, among others, to forensic investigators to help determine if the DNA of potential suspects match evidences left at crime scenes.

Mejica was found bludgeoned and half-naked around 8 p.m. on Jan. 31 at an isolated and grassy area in Barangay Pandan Dulipe in the capital town of San Jose in Antique. She died three hours later at the Regional Antique General Memorial Hospital.

Her male companion was also hit in the head but survived.

The suspect has confessed to bludgeoning and raping Mejica.

Mejica's family said they believed she was raped or gang-raped.

Mexican drug lord makes it to world's wealthiest list

From page A1

ured for the spot.

It is unclear what Guzmán, who is just 5 feet tall (1.55 meters), thinks of the 41st notice. Reuters senior editor Lynn Hoff said that "unfortunately ... Guzmán could not be reached for comment."

When described as Mexico's most powerful cartel kingpin, Guzmán escaped from prison in 2001 to set off a wave of killings across Mexico in an attempt to dominate the country's highly lucrative drug trade into the United States.

Officials believe Guzmán changes his cell phone every day to avoid being tracked. He has been on the run with a $5-million reward on his head since he escaped while hidden in a laundry van.

Using a wide network of safe houses ranging from plush mansions to caves, Guzmán is at his cultivated nickname Mexico's so-called Golden Triangle, the mountainous, drug-producing region in the states of Sinaloa, Chihuahua and Durango, where he has bribed police to protect him, the government says.

"He's almost untouchable," said a senior US official, who declined to be named. "The moment we send a helicopter to anywhere near where we think he is, we are bounced by informers."

When Guzmán married his 14-year-old bride in 2007 at a wedding in southern Durango, US officials say they knew about the event but he was too heavily guarded for Mexican soldiers to reach him.

At the time of his escape in 2001, Guzmán was serving more than 20 years for criminal association and bribery. But he has never been convicted of ordering the killings charges.

Biggest cocaine provider

Guzmán is now the first drug trafficker to make the list. Before says Colombian counter kingpin Pablo Escobar was once included, before dying in a shootout with police in 1993.

Forbes has said Escobar amassed a fortune of $3 billion before he was killed.

The Associated Press put Guzmán's age at 54, Reuters at 52.

Forbes cited estimates that Guzmán and his operation likely proceed 25 percent of the $18 billion to $39 billion in drug revenues that Mexican and Colombian traffickers launched last years—"enough for him to have pocketed $3 billion even his current and once a spot on the billionaires list for the first time."

The Mexican smuggler is "basically one of the biggest providers of cocaine in the United States," Hoff said.

Vicious hit men

Guzmán's ability to elude capture for eight years is an embarrassment to the Mexican government.

He has outwitted four major government crimes to find him. His escapades are the stuff of legend in the areas he controls and in popular "narcocorrido" songs that glorify drug traffickers.

Some 15,000 people have been killed in drug violence across Mexico since the start of last year as rival gangs fight each other and Mexican security forces. Guzmán's endurance from the Sinaloa cartel are among the most vicious hit men.

About 90 percent of all cocaine consumed in the United States comes through Mexico. It also is a major source of heroin, methamphetamines and marijuana in the United States.

Guzmán set off a wave of killings in the border city of Ciudad Juarez early last year when he tried to muscle in on the territory of a local cartel.

Mexican stabbing officials say Guzmán began waging war for Ciudad Juarez when the local cartel tried to change the rules for smuggling narcotics through the city, he said.

"Guzmán has been pouring all men and resources into the city since last year to try to eliminate the Juarez cartel," said Tony Payan, a drug-cartel analyst at University of Texas in El Paso.

'A silent shadow'

The killings have turned Ciudad Juarez into the most violent city in Mexico.

Guzmán is also fighting for control of the lucrative smuggling route through Tijuana into California.

He set off a similar fight for smuggling routes into eastern Texas in 2006 but has so far been driven back by the Gulf cartel, which had controlled the area, Payan said. Reuters, Bradley and AP

Pinays beat men in math

From page A1

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2003 and 1999, the Science Education Institute (SEI) viewed the girls' study, and found that Filipino teenagers "are more in the country's ranks."

"The studies show that though improvement, young women in the scientific realm is an uphill climb, it is very possible to achieve that goal," said Director Jesus Orpinas of SEI, an arm-bed agency of the science department.

The math test is composed of five areas: number, algebra, data, geometry and measurement.

The number section tests the students' understanding of such theories like integers, fractions and ratios. SEI's Mark Jose Bolito explained in a phone interview.

The data section tests pupils' comprehension when numbers are presented in tables, graphs and figures, he said.

The section on geometry assess pupils' knowledge of angles and figures, he said.

The section on measurement tests pupils' understanding of such theories like longest, heaviest and units. SEI's Mark Jose Bolito explained in a phone interview.

The data section tests pupils comprehension when numbers are presented in tables, graphs and figures, he said.

The section on measurement tests pupils' knowledge of angles and figures, he said.

The section on geometry assess

Get Ochoco, ex-soldier urges gov't

IN THE KNOW

Ochoco one of conspirators?

GALMAN

DEL FIERRO OCHOCO, FORmer deputy commander of the Aviation Group (Command Airwarrior), had been linked in early 1982, months after former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Rolando Ilos 1986 interview with the Inquirer at the then Bataan Prisons, Major Pablo Martinez, one of the 16 soldiers convicted for the killings of Aquino and fall guy Rolando Galman, identified Ochoco as one of the conspirators.

Ochoco, a known protégé of former Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, along with Maj. Gen. Romeo Ileto of the Philippine Constabulary and Commission on the Anti-Smuggling, had planned the killings, according to Martinez.

After he became a pastor of a religious group in prison, Martinez issued an affidavit in 2004 stating that a month before Aquino's murder, Ochoco revealed to him that people recommending the dictator Ferdinand Marcos wanted to kill the opposition leader.

Martinez claimed to have known Ochoco since 1967 when Lieber visited the Korean as an aide-de-camp to the National Intelligence and Security Agency. It was also Ochoco who asked Martinez to join Aviacom.

In his affidavit, Martinez said that two days before the assassination, Ochoco had briefly brought to the Garrison Hotel in Pasay to meet Galman. He was allegedly ordered to assist Galman into the plane.

On the morning of Aug. 21, Martinez and Galman appeared with incense that instructions from Ochoco, Galman and Ver-

From page A1

Former M/Sgt. Pablo Martinez said the government should call Ochoco to testify in any new investigation into the circumstances, along with Gen. Felipe Valerio, leader of an Aviacom team in airport Aquino.

"Valerio is among those who might be able to shed light, but to me, it's Ochoco whom the government should ask because he was the one who ordered me to bring Galman to the airport," Martinez said.

Martinez revealed a Bonifacio Day Mass on Wednesday for the 16 soldiers convicted but took his return convicted to their deed to seven earlier released, like Martinez.

Ochoco and Master Sergeant Jesus Castro, a master of the Aquino-Galman double murder case following the People Power Revolution that ousted the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Aquino, a senator and prominent presidential candidate, was incarcerated by Marcos upon the declaration of martial law in 1972. He was freed in 1980 to undergo a heart bypass operation in the United States.

In spite of warnings that he will be killed, Aquino returned home to rally the divided opposition against Marcos, who was then seriously ill with kidney problems.

'Water under the bridge'

On Tuesday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that he would order a reopening of the investigation to bring the masterminds of the murders to court, if Ochoco could be found.

Gonzalez said that if there was anyone who could point to the killers, it would be Valerio.

Gonzalez, who as Davao-based prosecutor the Aquino-Galman case in the Sandiganbayan, said the mastermind of the murders was very much around, based on the facts of the case and circumstantial evidence.

He declined to elaborate, saying "that's water under the bridge."

Almost a decade into their incarceration, Martinez admitted to his fellow convicted soldiers that he brought Galman, upon orders by Ochoco, to the Manila International Airport to carry out the assassination outlaw on Aquino.

Of the 16 convicted soldiers, it was only Martinez who claimed knowledge of at least a part of the conspiracy. The rest maintained that they had no part in the plot, maintaining the Dilumo version of the slayings that Galman killed Aquino because he himself was also dead.

Different orders

Ex-Sgt. Ernesto Mesias said Galman had outlived him a different order shortly before Aquino disembarked from the China Airlines jetliner.

Mesias said the order backed by seven such soldiers at the airport would end up killing each other once Aquino was shot dead by Galman.

"It turned out, we were given different orders but all of them were designed to make us shoot each other," Mesias said in Filipino.

Mesias said he and his fellow colleagues had given what they believed were valid information to Public Attorney's Office head Persida Rueda-Acosta. The interrogator could be used in a new investigation, he said.

The soldiers said they wanted a reopening of the case so that they could at least clear their names, despite voluminous physical and testimonial evidence presented during the ten-feeling investigation undertaken by the commission created by Cesareo Agnese and the Sandiganbayan that pointed to them as the killers.

The Supreme Court has twice rejected the petition of the soldiers for a reopening of the case, saying they had no new evidence to offer.

Case still alive

Acosta told the Inquirer that Ochoco had never been indicted in the double murder, which meant that "the case against him is still alive," citing Article VI of the Revised Penal Code. Acosta said Galman was believed to be a hero in the crisis of those years.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said that Mr Arroyo had ordered remedies to exonerate against Valerio, who is said to be working as a consultant adviser in the United States under an invented name.

Mateo recalled that shortly after the Edsa Revolution, Valerio told him they all ought to leave the country as he sensed that their case would be reopened. All of the accused had been acquitted in the first Sandiganbayan trial.

"I told him I cannot leave my family. Besides, I know I was not involved in what [Valerio] like country. Leaving will only make me look guilty," Mateo said.

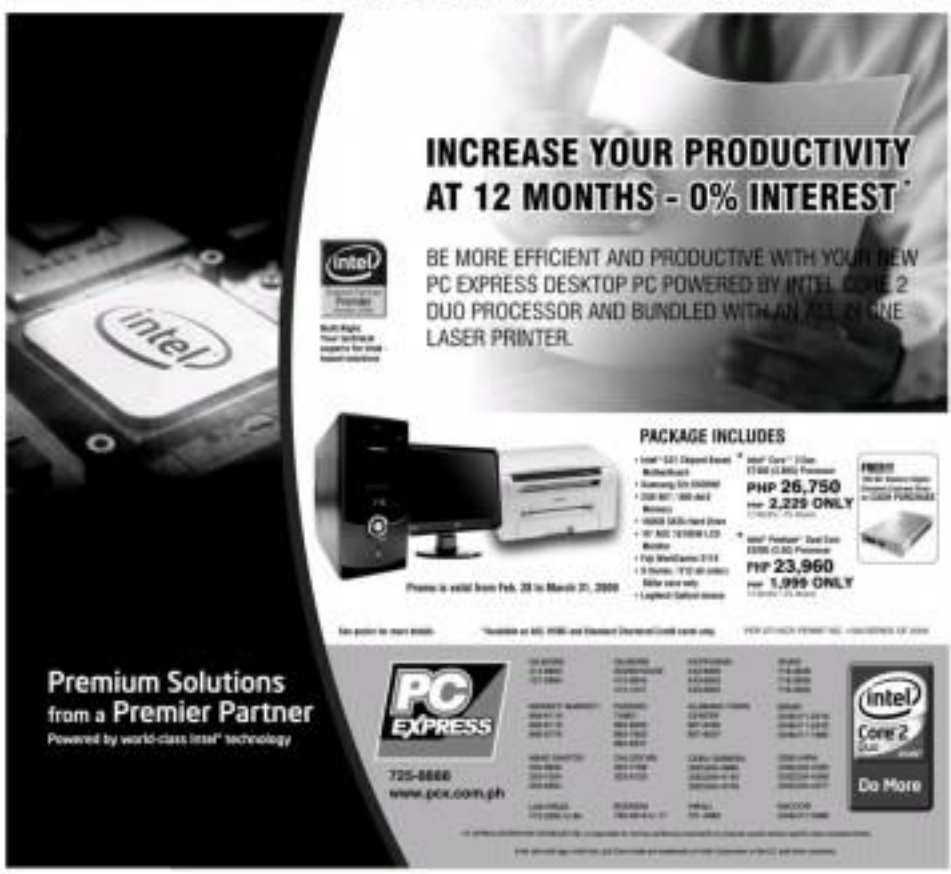
Msgr. Robert Obligacion, chaplain of the New Bilibid Prisons, said the soldiers had told him that some of them, like Mateo, had received an invitation to live in anywhere if they wanted to leave the Philippines.

"It was said that those who wanted to leave will be cleared on a private place, a Love jet, to Australia," Obligacion said.

MARTINEZ

OCHOCO

VALERIO



'Swiss gigolo' who took BMW heiress for a ride gets 6 years

MUNICH—A MAN JAILED "The Swiss gigolo" by the German media was sentenced to six years in prison for defrauding Germany's richest woman of nearly 40 million ($5 million) and attempting to blackmail her for several millions more.

Helg Sgarbi (Olivia here) admitted to the Munich court that he threatened to release recently recorded videotapes of trysts with BMW heiress Susanne Klatten, 46, unless the married woman gave him millions to keep quiet.

The 44-year-old also admitted cornering Klatten to give him some 37 million ($5 million) by saying it was for the treatment of a girl left paraplegic after he hit her with his car.

Sgarbi told the court he had spiralled into penal Klatten, laying the groundwork for his crimes when he first met her at a spa near Innsbruck, Austria, in July 2007.

SGARBI

KLATTEN

Fraud, blackmail

The Munich state court found Sgarbi guilty of fraud and attempted blackmail of Klatten, who wanted him in prison.

He was also found guilty of fraud and attempted blackmail for taking extra 4 million ($5 million) from three other women—identified by the initials K., S., and S.—who were lured by sadness' lies in their investigations of the Klatten case.

Prosecutors said the reason he was the victim is a series of scams by Sgarbi, who trained as a lawyer, spoke six languages and worked as a banker at Credit Suisse until the mid-1990s. He also served as a reserve officer in the Swiss army.

Klatten is the daughter of the late BMW magnate Herbert Quandt and holds a 46 percent stake in the company along with her brother and brother. She also owns a 48.5 percent share of chemical company Altana.

Forbes magazine listed her as the fifth richest person in the world last year, with a personal fortune of around $9.6 billion (euro7.56 billion). The Quandt family is regarded in Germany as quasi-royalty. AP

FORBES RICHEST LIST

Microsoft Corp founder Bill Gates is the richest man again, overtaking investor Warren Buffett, as the global financial meltdown wiped out $2 trillion from the net worth of the world's billionaires, Forbes Magazine said on Wednesday

TOP TEN RICHEST

$B 2009 net worth $B 2008 net worth

2009 rank	2008 rank	Name	Citizenship	Age	Net worth in US$ billions
1	1	William Gates III	U.S.	53	40
2	7	Warren Buffett	U.S.	78	62
3	2	Carlos Slim Helu & family	Mexico	68	60
4	14	Lawrence Ellison	U.S.	64	22
5	7	Ingvar Kamprad & family	Sweden	82	31
6	10	Karl Albrecht	Germany	89	27
7	5	Mukesh Ambani	India	51	43
8	4	Lakshmi Mittal	India	59	45
9	16	Theo Albrecht	Germany	87	23
10	22	Amancio Ortega	Spain	73	20

COLLECTIVE NET WORTH in US$ billion

2009: $2.4 Share of top ten richest 10.8%

2008: $4.4 Share of top ten richest 9%

Source: Forbes Magazine

AVERAGE NET WORTH in US$ billion

2.2 2.2 2.2 3.6 3.9 2.3
04 05 06 07 08 09

NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES

587 691 793 946 1,125 793
04 05 06 07 08 09

Photo of Bill Gates: jdlasica.com / Reuters

REUTERS

IN THE KNOW: Sy family 234th; Tans 522nd

WHILE MOST THAN 300 of the world's richest people fell out of the ranks of billionaires, here Filipino tycoons, real estate tycoon Henry Sy and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan, moved up the ranks.

In the list of more than 793 billionaires released by Forbes magazine on Wednesday, Sy and his family ranked 234th with a net worth of $2.7 billion. The Tans were 522nd with a net worth of $1.4 billion.

Sy ranked as the fifth biggest shopping mall operator with 30 malls throughout the country, made a big leap, rising from 840th last year.

His fortune increased by $1.3 billion from a net worth of $1.4 billion in 2008.

$108-M loss

The Tys were the holding company for SM Investments Corp., which has interests in a dozen companies, including the country's second-largest bank, Banco de Oro Unibank.

Tan and his family, who control the country's largest cigarette firm and own national carrier Philippine Airlines, also moved up in the rankings, being at 790th in 2008.

But their net worth of $1.4 billion this year represented a decline of $108 million from their net worth of $1.5 billion in 2008.

Forbes said the average net worth of the world's 793 billionaires this year is $2.8 billion, down 35 percent from 2008.

"The last time the average was that low was in 2002," Forbes said.

(Aleo Datuin, Inquirer Research; Sources: Forbes.com, PDI Archive)

POOR BILLIONAIRES

Bill Gates is richest man again; Sy, Tan climb up list

Turn to page A-2

the richest man in the world, with $40 billion, after slipping to third last year when he lost nearly $58 billion. Buffett, last year's richest man, fell to second place with $37 billion, down from $62 billion.

Mexican telecommunications tycoon Carlos Slim took third place with $35 billion, down from $60 billion.

Collectively, the top three billionaires lost $80 billion in the year to Feb. 13, when Forbes took a snapshot of wealth around the world to compile its annual list of billionaires.

Most are self-made

About 64 percent of the billionaires are self-made and their average age is 63.7, a slight rise resulting from the losses of members of rich Russian and Chinese, whose average ages last year were 46 and 48.

By contrast with that aging trend, Gates is a relatively youthful 53.

The youngest billionaire picks this year goes to Albert von Thurn und Taxis of Germany, who is 29 and listed as having $2.1 billion.

Chief executive of Forbes Magazine Steve Forbes said that, while few would shed a tear for the plight of a billionaire, it was sad for the economy when an impressive asset is wasted.

"Billionaires don't have to worry about their next meal, but if their wealth is declining and you're not creating numerous new billionaires, it means the rest of the world is not doing very well," Forbes said regretfully.

"The typical billionaire is down at least one third on their net worth."

Home to billionaires

The net worth of the world's billionaires fell from $4.4 trillion to $2.4 trillion, while the number of billionaires was down to 793 from 1,125.

"It's the first time more than 300 that we have lost billionaires, but we've never before lost anywhere near this number," said Luisa Kroll, senior editor of Forbes.

"It's really hard to find something to cheer about unless you get some perverse pleasure in reading that some of the most successful ... people in the world ... can't figure out this global economic turmoil better than the rest of us."

New York City replaced Moscow as home to the most billionaires, with 55.

Russia, which saw the number of super-rich soar in recent years, suffered among the biggest shocks, with the number of billionaires down to 32 from 87.

Up fast, down past

Russian oligarchs have long been known for flaunting their wealth, but this year, most of them make it into the city top 20, compared to four in the 2008 list.

The US ranks blind 1-1 of the 20 top spots.

Other developing countries that saw fast growth in previous years were hit hard as well, including Turkey, where the number of billionaires fell to 23 from 35, partly due to the collapse in the value of the lira currency and index.

Indian businessmen Anil Ambani, the biggest gainer on last year's list, was the biggest loser this time, with $32.6 billion wiped out over the last 12 months. Ranked ninth last year, he fell to No. 34 with an estimated wealth of $10.1 billion.

"India took a huge whack," Kroll said, noting that last year Indians held four of the top 10 spots and nine only two, and the number of Indian billionaires more than halved to 24.

Of those who remained or returned to the list, 656 saw their net worth fall, 52 held even and only 44 managed to expand their wealth.

Bloomberg star rises

The only person in the top 20 who did not lose money was New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, whose net worth was revised up to $16 billion from $11.5 billion because of a revaluation of his media company Bloomberg LP, Forbes said.

Bloomberg is now the richest man in New York, jumping from No. 66 in the world to No. 17.

Forbes Senior Editor Matthew Miller said that, in the current climate, those who lost only 20 percent of their wealth were doing relatively well—for example, the members of the Walton family, which founded discount retailer Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

"They lost 40 billion each, but Wal-Mart stock hasn't completely fallen off the cliff like everything else," he said.

Another dissident retailer sliding out the storm was Japan's Tadashi Yanai. He fine Fast Retailing, known for its Uniqlo stores, helped push him down 200 places to No. 50th and raised his net worth to $8 billion from $3.6 billion.

Others who managed to get richer were investors George Soros and Ronald Perelman, as well as short-seller John Paulson, who has profited from the fall in financial stocks, and entertainer Oprah Winfrey who jumped to No. 234 from No. 462.

Facebook founder

Among those conspicuous by their absence from the list was Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, one of last year's stars when he became the youngest self-made billionaire to make the list.

Also dropping out were big name casualties of the financial crisis as Wall Street—former American International Group chief executive Hunter "Hank" Greenberg and former Citigroup chief executive Sanford Weill.

Most thrashed, the Times accused of an $8-billion fraud by US regulators, was also booted off the list. *Reports from Reuters and AFP*

For a memorable Easter weekend, make Cebu your family's holiday destination. The Marco Polo Plaza, Cebu City's only 5-star hotel, recreates long-held traditions for the perfect family getaway.

Money, grassroots network will decide 2010 polls, say analysts

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECtion next year will be won by the candidate who has the biggest campaign budget and greatest local network, analysts said yesterday.

Almost a half-dozen candidates are expected to be in the fray for the May 2010 presidential election to replace President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and lead the country for the next six years.

"This is going to be one of the closest political contests in Philippine history," said Earl Parreñas, an analyst at the Institute for Political and Electoral Reforms.

"Based on initial public opinion polls, we don't really see any runaway candidate. First year's concern might be decided by less than one million votes [out of a 40-million electorate] so the candidates with vast resources and network would really have a clear edge."

The likely candidates are:

■ Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., Inc. has the best placed in terms of money, he is a self-made billionaire and controls real estate firm Vista Land and Lifescapes. In politics for 17 years, he says his experience in running a company will be key to a successful presidency.

■ Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II. Called the intelligent man's candidate, Roxas is a former Mail Street banker and the grandson of a former president. He has surveyed as trade secretary in two Cabinets. So much is the money opposition's efforts to his coattail belongs to the wealthy Ateneva clan, which owns a large chunk of Manila real estate.

■ Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero. Not yet 40, he qualifies to run for president only in November. He is frequently compared with US President Barack Obama and is banking on his charisma and the huge number of young voters to win. He is seeking the backing of the Nacionalista People's Coalition, headed by Sen. Miguel Zubiri Edmundo Cojuangco, one of the wealthiest individuals in the country.

■ Sen. Loren Legarda. The only woman among likely candidates, she won the biggest number of votes in the senatorial elections in 2007, a good indicator of national appeal. A former news girl and television news reader, she wants to be the country's first "green" president. May be hampered by a lack of funds and doubts whether another woman would be able to succeed Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, whose popularity is currently low.

+ Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro. Says he is waiting for Ms Arroyo's approval. If he gets that, he will get the support of the powerful Lakas-Kampi ruling coalition's electoral machine, but may also inherit Ms Arroyo's unpopularity. Teodoro is also a nephew of former President Corazon Aquino and of Cojuangco, said the latter could end up supporting him.

■ Vice President Manuel "Noli" de Castro. Consistently high in opinion polls, but has refused to indicate whether he will be a candidate. His costly spokes, publicity shoot notwithstanding, but experts say he is handicapped by because of his razor-sharp and television news anchor.

Parties don't matter

Analysts say a good campaign could cost P5 billion to P4 billion and a loyal network will be essential for a candidate looking to win.

"Parties do not really matter, because at the end of the day politicians will choose the one with the biggest chance," said political analyst Antonio Gaterman.

Local politicians, from governors down to mayors, were expected to cross party lines and localities to support the candidate perceived to have the highest chance to win, he said.

"The candidate is the party," Gaterman said.

By the end of this year, perhaps only four serious candidates will be left, analysts said.

"By then, the major political forces would have chosen their bets," Gaterman said. "It's totally a free-for-all season," he added. —Reuters

Lakas open to Teodoro

From page A1

strong, decent, highly qualified, with no political baggage and had not been linked to controversies.

However, he's no media savvy, Datol said. "He still needs proper coaching and popularity," said the senator, apparently referring to Teodoro's poor showing in surveys.

"If he does become in the next survey he could be included [in the Lakas list], but now he's not yet included. We have to consider winnability," said the Lakas secretary general.

Zubiri said Teodoro was a "big chance" to the other presidential aspirants because of his qualifications.

Now that Teodoro has spoken, the names can't be too far behind.

Make a difference

Dropping any inhibitions, the aide of the defense secretary is hoping the people would see how his friend's potential as a leader can serve his him.

"I hope people are smart enough to realize his potential and that he can surely source to make a difference not because he wants to be in the limelight," Salina Rep. Mercedes Nikki Prieto-Teodoro told reporters in Malacañang.

Prieto-Teodoro believed that the president also was aware of her husband, but said that her husband was the kind of leader the country would need because he was coming in fresh with a clean record.

"My husband is a newcomer. He's 44 years old. In 2010, he'll be 46, so he's coming in with a clean record and this country is all because needs clear blood," she said.

She said the others "cling to politics so much that they cannot see the big picture of how desperate the Filipinos are, and that's one thing that my husband has seen there."

The lawmaker's son in Malacañang to witness the signing by Ms Arroyo of the Republic Act No. 9523, which shortens the period of adopting an abandoned child.

FOR ORPHANS' BENEFIT President Arroyo gestures after signing Republic Act No. 9523 which requires certification of the DSWD that a child is legally available for adoption as a precondition for adoption proceedings to start. At right is DSWD Secretary Esperanza Cabral. EDWIN BACASMAS

Sounds good

"Teodoro for President" sounds good," Lagman lawmakers from the ruling partyites Lakas-CMD and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman said Teodoro's decision to run was a welcome development because the defense secretary has "commanding credentials."

"He's a no-nonsense guy and he's candid enough not to shy away from being identified with the President," Lagman said.

Blood thicker than water

Lagman wondered whether Teodoro's presidential bid would undermine the trend of his predecessors who to suppose in the 2010 polls. The NPC is reportedly eyeing Senators Panfilo Escudero or Loren Legarda as its standard-bearer.

"Blood is thicker than water. There could be some changes in the endorsement of his uncle," Lagman said at the Serye forum in Quezon City.

At the forum, Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez of Kampi said he would support Teodoro's candidacy if the party would decide to make him its standard-bearer.

He said Teodoro should be included in the surveys assessing the popularity of those seeking the presidency.

Mandaluyong Rep. Rolly Famy expressed concern that Teodoro might use his present office to further his political ambition.

Blanco said this was the unanimous of some about Bayani Fernando, Metro Manila Development Authority chair, who has long signified his desire to be President.

Councilors' league

While certain lawmakers have started calling for his resignation as defense secretary, Teodoro has gained the support of the Philippine Councilors League (PCL).

In a resolution issued on Wednesday, the 10,000-strong union of councilors said it believed in his "strong leadership, commitment and enormous potential" to serve the public. It encouraged him to seek "bigger and better" responsibility in government.

The resolution, practically an endorsement of Teodoro's presidential bid, was signed by the PCL national president, Quezon City Councilor Victor Ferrer Jr., and its national chair, Dagupan Councilor Michael Fernandez.

It was issued during the group's first quarter meeting held in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, where Teodoro addressed the group in keynote speaker.

Rights abuses

A militant group is not worried about Teodoro's plan to run for president.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said the presidential ambition of Teodoro would hinder him from getting the military officials linked to human rights abuses.

"Now that he plans to run for president, Mr. Teodoro will not risk antagonizing the military establishment. He would want to have the support of the military when he runs for office, the same way [President] Arroyo used the support of the military in 2004," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said in a press statement.

"How then can we expect him to make his generals accountable for their abuses?" Reyes asked. *With reports from Nikko Dizon, Jocelyn R. Uy and Sofia D. Saldaniega*

VELASCO

Bro. Mike: I'll run for president if bishops back me

By Cleve Paez Dagan

MARIANO "BROTHER MIKE" Velarde, leader of the influential Catholic lay charismatic group El Shaddai, yesterday said he would run for president if the Catholic bishops would endorse him.

This was the latest instance that the 69-year-old El Shaddai leader canceled off his "dream" of going for the country's highest office.

In an interview over Catholic Church-run Radio Veritas, Velarde said he himself was considering the idea of running for president as he had yet to decide whom to endorse among the presidential aspirants.

"May lalabas ako eh, para pumapasok ito sa isang pag-iisip. Mayroon naghahalintulad sa akin. I have plans myself, but that's just a dream although sometimes it comes true," he said with a chuckle.

He added that he was concerned with his citizens "calling," referring to his being the leader of one of the most popular religious organizations in the country.

Asked if he would indeed run in the 2010 elections, Velarde said: "It depends."

"If the Bishops of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines would endorse me, I will obey," he said.

"If the CBCP tells me, 'You're the one Brother Mike,' I will imply 'Yes sir' because I'm obedient. I'm a loyal soldier of the Church," Velarde said.

Velarde hinted in previous interviews that he might run for president since assured that he had a very good chances of being elected.

The CBCP however, does not officially endorse any candidate, according to CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo.

"As a group, we do not endorse because we are neutral in politics. We have not endorsed anyone because it's a political act," Lagdameo said on Radio Veritas after Velarde's interview.

The CBCP merely lists the ideal qualifications of a candidate, which includes "good moral character," he said.

2010 race too close to call, says Pulse Asia survey

From page A1

In Luzon outside Metro Manila, respondents were "almost equally supportive" of Jr Cruz (19 percent), Escudero (17 percent), Legarda (15 percent) and Villar (14 percent).

In Cruz's also had a "slight lead" over the other probable candidates among Class D respondents at 20 percent.

"The overall figures recorded in February 2009 do not differ significantly from those recorded in October 2008," Pulse Asia said.

As scheduled

The latest survey also found that most Filipinos (65 percent) were convinced that the May 2010 general elections would be held as scheduled, a result almost identical to those in May (66 percent) and October (65 percent) surveys.

Only 13 percent believed it will.

Pulse Asia noted that, of the 65 names whose senatorial voters preferences were probed in the survey, 12 had "a statistical chance of winning," had the elections been held last month.

"Virtually all Filipinos have at least one preferred senatorial candidate," Pulse Asia said.

Among the leaders in the survey were Senators Jinggoy Estrada (51.8 percent), Juan Ponce Enrile (48.8 percent), and Ramon Revilla Jr. (48.8 percent).

Pulse Asia placed Estrada anywhere from first to third places, while Cayetano and Biazon were in first to fourth places.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago (47 percent) had a statistical ranking of second to fifth places, while former Sen. Francisco Tatad (42.7 percent) was in fourth to seventh places. Senators Sandy Madrigal (38.8 percent) and Ramon Revilla Jr. (37.8 percent) would land anywhere from fifth to 11th place, Pulse Asia said.

Sharing the sixth to 12th spots were Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III (36.1 percent), Senate Assistant Majority Floor Leader Alan Peter Cayetano (35.8 percent), and Department of Budget and Management Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. (32.6 percent), and Optical Media Board Chair Edu Manzano (31.4 percent).

Dangerous Drugs Board Chair Vicente C. Sotto III (31.2 percent) was in the eighth to 14th places, while Pulse Asia placed Intramuros Reina Hidalgo (28 percent), Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile (27.6 percent), Bhaey (27.2 percent) and Sen. Richard Gordon (26.9 percent) were in 12th to 16th places.

The survey was conducted from Feb. 2 to Feb. 13 using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

In a statement, Enrile described the results of the survey were "definitely flattering, but I am not yet a declared candidate."

He will turn 40 in October, a requirement to run for senator, from a natural-born Filipino can run for president.

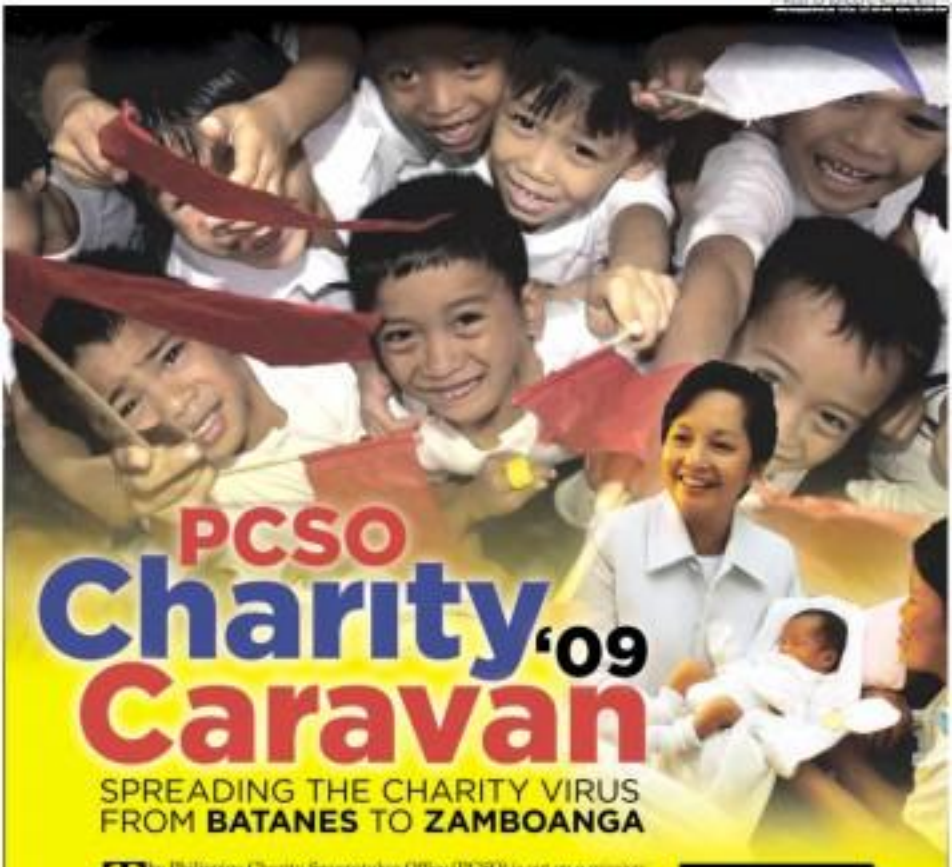
However, in an interview with dwIZ's Cely Bueno early in the day, Enrile was jokingly said that it was not a "congratulations but consideration" because respondents in surveys were the usual targets of political scandals.

Legarda also gladly welcomed the survey. "Constituency is the inspired by the people's overwhelming support in my provincial reign," she said.

Noting that the nationwide survey showed no clear winner in the presidential election if it were held last month, she said: "What the opposition needs to do is to unite so that members can vote for one."

Villar said he was elated by the people's continued support for and confidence in him, as this "shows the people's appreciation of our work as a public servant."

"Certainly it fuels our commitment to help address the many challenges confronting our countrymen," he said. *Reports from Rebecca Rafael, Inquirer Research, Michael Lim Ubac*



PCSO Charity '09 Caravan

SPREADING THE CHARITY VIRUS FROM **BATANES** TO **ZAMBOANGA**

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) is out on a mission: spread the charity virus throughout the country.

The grassroots campaign to spread the charity virus took off yesterday, March 12, in the northern tip town of Basco in Batanes, where the PCSO initiated the first leg of its Charity Caravan for year 2009.

The Caravan will cover 20 key cities and municipalities throughout the country, reaching as far as Pagadian City in Zamboanga del Sur and wrapping up activities on the first week of July.

Activities for the Charity Caravan include motorcade around the target areas, medical and dental missions in far-flung barangays and mini-concerts in public places with the aim of popularizing the various revenue and service programs of PCSO.

Highlighting the Caravan is the launching of the Kalinga ng PCSO programs in the barangay level in order to recruit thousands of volunteers needed to expand the reach of medical and dental missions of the charity agency.

The PCSO aims to mobilize these volunteers particularly in the National Medical Mission on September, which attempts to provide simultaneous medical and dental missions in the country's 42,000 barangays.

All participating volunteers of the Kalinga ng PCSO are given the opportunity to be rewarded with the PCSO Health Card, which puts them on the priority list of those seeking financial and medical assistance from the charity agency.

For the Caravan's Batanes leg, more than 30 health professionals from PCSO hospital in Basco to provide free medical and dental treatment to poor residents from there adjacent towns in the province.

Supervising the medical missions were the PCSO Board of Directors, who distributed vitamins and several thousand kilos of rice to underprivileged Batanes residents.

The PCSO Board of Directors, led by Chairman Sergio Valencia, also awarded the initial tranche of endowment fund worth P800,000 to the Provincial Government of Batanes for the run of the Sabtang Community Hospital and Ibatan District Hospital.

With the endowment fund, these hospitals can now accept charity patients whose hospital bills would be purely shouldered by the PCSO.

During the medical mission, the PCSO provided bottles for the Individual Medical Assistance Program (IMAP) to entertain requests for financial assistance from Batanes residents who cannot afford to avail their sick relatives to the hospital.

Now version of the Kalinga ng PCSO, on the other hand, made their presence felt in the Caravan with a bicycle tour of the scenic spots around Basco, encouraging everyone to adopt a healthy lifestyle in order to spare themselves from the cost of medical and hospital expenses.

"The Charity Caravan serves as a one-stop shop for PCSO programs and projects," explained PCSO General Manager and Vice Chair Rosario Uriarte.

"This is PCSO's strategy to fast-track the spread of charity virus in all parts of the country," Uriarte added.

PCSO CHARITY CARAVAN '09 SCHEDULE

Date	Province/Place
March 12-14	Basco, Batanes
March 15-16	Nueva Vizcaya
March 19-20	Tuguegarao City
March 26-27	Cabanatuan City
April 2-4	Puerto Princesa, Palawan
April 16-18	Negros Occidental, Bacolod
April 20-21	Iloilo City
April 23-24	Negros Oriental, Dumaguete
April 30-May 1	Lanao del Norte, Iligan
May 7-8	Tagbilaran, Bohol
May 11-12	Palayan, Cotabato, Koronadal
May 15-17	Davao del Norte, Tagum
May 20-21	Cagayan de Oro
June 2-4	Zamboanga del Sur, Pagadian
June 9-10	Davao, La Union
June 11-12	Pangasinan, Dagupan
June 15-17	Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga City
June 18-19	Mindoro Occidental, San Jose
June 23-24	Quezon, Lucena
June 25-26	Marinduque, Boac
July 1-2	Catanduanes, Virac

75th Anniversary

Tama, Dapat & Wasto. Tulong mo sa, Kalinga ng PCSO

Spread the Charity Virus.

Gov't rejects reported ₱50-M ransom demand

By Christine F. Esguerra and Jocelyn R. Uy

THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT give in to the purported P50-million ransom demand of the Abu Sayyaf.

"We cannot be dictated upon by the other side," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in reference to the bandit group's purported demand in exchange for the release of Eugenio Vagni, Italian consultant of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Press Secretary Jorge Remonde described the supposed demand as "arrogance of the highest order, which all civilized people should condemn in the strongest possible terms."

Ermita reiterated the public that no ransom would be paid for the release of the three aid workers.

"We always observe a policy of 'no ransom payment' for such situations," he said.

"You can be very sure that money will not be happening (for) ransom be revealed. But we're doing something.... For the safe release of the hostages," he added.

Robuka

Information on the purported ransom demand came from Commander Cito Wagay Abdilasis Sema and Abdul Sahim, chair and secretary-general, respectively, of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Sema and Sahim had claimed that if the ransom demand could not be met, the next best option would be a "very dangerous" cross-border operation by government troops.

At a press briefing, Anthony Golez, the deputy spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said he doubted the veracity of the ransom demand.

He noted that neither Undersecretary Gilbert Teodoro nor Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, had heard about it.

Golez rebuked Sema and Sahim for running out with the information in the media.

"We would like to request the local government officials to refrain from publishing issues in the media because the safety of the victims is compromised," he said. "That's the most important thing, and they know that [the issue] should not be discussed to the media."

Golez stressed that the matter should be handled by the local crisis committee headed by Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan.

"The most important thing is for local government officials to get our strong appeal for them to request agreements at the local crisis committee," Golez said.

No nap

In a radio interview, Gordon said the Red Cross would never pay ransom to the abductors.

"I've been telling the kidnappers that they cannot get any ransom from us because we are not going to give it. I want this to end without ransom being paid because the Red Cross wants to continue working [in Sulu] and helping even the kidnappers' relatives," he said, adding:

"You cannot get any ransom from us ... whatever happens."

Who would benefit from the media-because-the-safety-of-the-victims-is-compromised," he said. "That's the most important thing, and they know that [the issue] should not be discussed to the media."

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Who would benefit from the release of the three aid workers? Ermita said:

"Of course, the public that no ransom would be paid for the release of the three aid workers.

"We always observe a policy of 'no ransom payment' for such situations," he said.

"You can be very sure that money will not be happening (for) ransom be revealed. But we're doing something.... For the safe release of the hostages," he added.

Robuka

Information on the purported ransom demand came from Commander Cito Wagay Abdilasis Sema and Abdul Sahim, chair and secretary-general, respectively, of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Sema and Sahim had claimed that if the ransom demand could not be met, the next best option would be a "very dangerous" cross-border operation by government troops.

At a press briefing, Anthony Golez, the deputy spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said he doubted the veracity of the ransom demand.

He noted that neither Undersecretary Gilbert Teodoro nor Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, had heard about it.

Golez rebuked Sema and Sahim for running out with the information in the media.

"We would like to request the local government officials to refrain from publishing issues in the media because the safety of the victims is

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
NEWS
FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2009

Miriam filed most number of bills in Senate

By Michael Lim Ubac

SENATOR MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO MAY BE SUFfering from "chronic fatigue syndrome," but she is the best performer in the Senate during the first half of the 14th Congress.

Records prepared by the Senate indexing and monitoring section showed that Santiago has filed 933—the most number of bills and resolutions—since the current Senate opened session in July 2007.

Sen. Manuel Villar came in second with 579 measures followed by former President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada with 536.

Senators Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero, Antonio Trillanes IV, Ramon Revilla Jr. also scored high in legislative output with 299, 288, 283, and 239 bills and resolutions filed, respectively.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile introduced the least number of bills—11—but scored high in amendatory Senate records showed.

Enrile earlier said a lawmaker's competence should not be gauged by the number of bills filed but by "the position he takes on issues that affect the life of the nation."

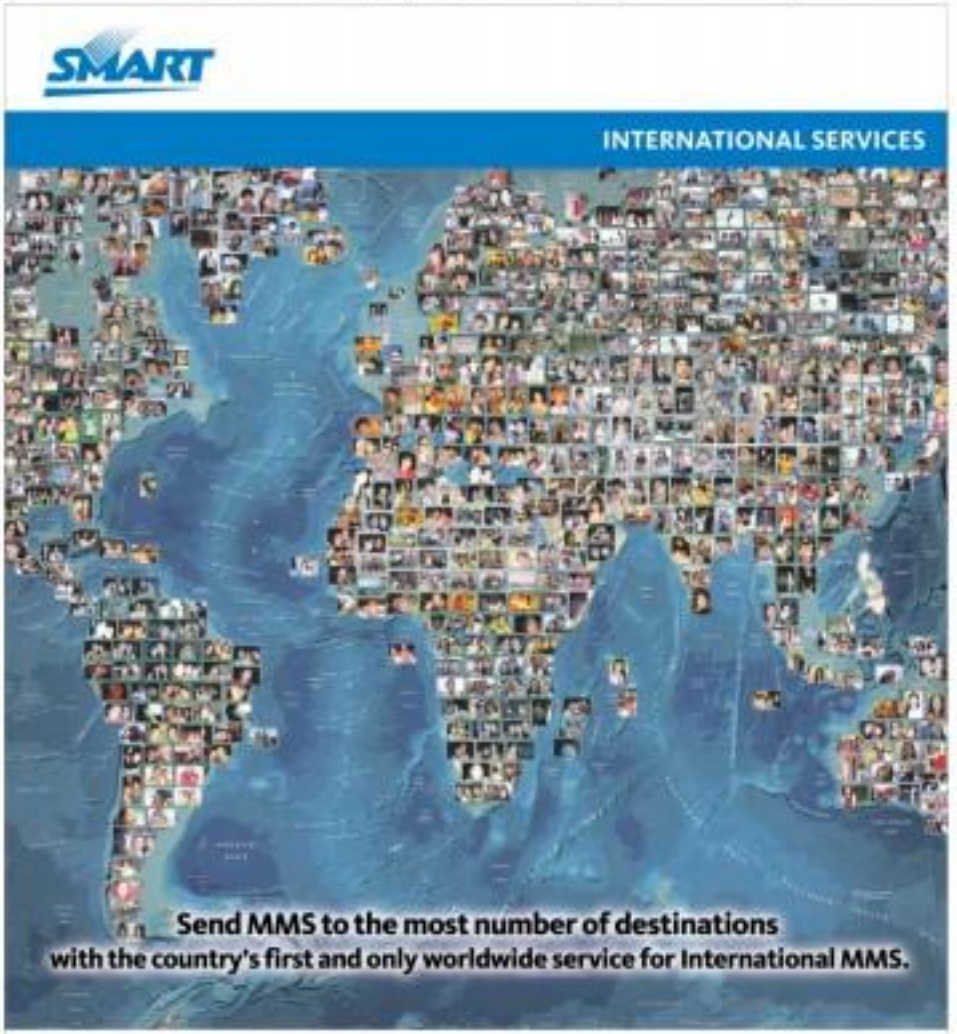
Santiago was absent in many Senate sessions last year because she claimed she was suffering from pneumonia eleven days after she met a road accident while campaigning for the presidency in 1992.

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri said the upper chamber "doubted through the first quarter" with seven major legislative measures before it scheduled for a month-long break last week.

For his part, Villar's absenteeism started when he was forced to relinquish the Senate presidency to Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile during a coup in November 2006.

Relieved of his duties as Senate chief, Villar has been spending a lot of time in the provinces, ostensibly to prop up his chances in the 2010 presidential elections.

On the whole, Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri said the upper chamber "doubted through the first quarter" with seven major legislative measures before it scheduled for a month-long break last week.



Aplus METRO
Editor Alejandro S. Lllanday

SECURITY guards block the entrance to the Ever Gotesco Grand Central Mall in Caloocan City to prevent the city government from taking over the establishment. (DAN ALMEDA)

Mall owner tells Caloocan City gov't: No to takeover

By Beverly T. Nicdao

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EVER Gotesco Grand Central Mall yesterday asserted its right over the property and said it would not turn the establishment over to the Caloocan City government.

Trevelin Machelli, the lawyer of the mall administration, told the Inquirer that the March 6 order from the Caloocan City Regional Trial Court allowing the city government to take over the mall was not valid since a Manila court had already issued an injunction in December 2008.

"The injunction issued by the Manila Regional Trial Court means that there should be a status quo as long as the case is pending in Manila," said Machelli.

She added that the city government should honor Gotesco's right to possess the mall since they have signed a deed of sale with the city government and made a downpayment of P50 million on the property.

"We stand by our right of possession and ask the Caloocan City government not to put the law in their own hands," the lawyers said.

Agreement not honored

Machelli explained that after leasing the property for 25 years, Gotesco reneged on its agreement with then Mayor Macario Asistio Sr. for the sale of the lot for the mall owner.

The agreement, however, was not honored by Asistio's successor, Reynaldo Malonzo, prompting Gotesco to take the case to the Supreme Court.

After the high tribunal later ordered the city government to honor the agreement, Gotesco made a downpayment of P50 million but has yet to pay the rest of the agreed upon price.

"Since the property is still owned by Gotesco and the title has not been

FULL A2

'Ipit Taxi' gang leader nabbed; 20 cabs seized

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE QUEZON CITY POLICE YESterday cracked down on a fleet of taxi cabs following the arrest of the suspected leader of an "Ipit Taxi" gang—a group of robbers preying on taxi passengers.

The police said the group was also involved in other criminal activities and used the "hired" taxi cabs as getaway vehicles.

"In less than a week, two of their members were involved in illegal activities which made us believe they were being run by an organized crime syndicate," Supt. Rodie Valeriz, the Quezon City Police District's Traffic Enforcement Unit chief, told the Inquirer.

He identified the alleged leader of the group as Ramon Cabilig Gonzales, 40, a native of Negros Occidental and a resident of Sitio Kamuning, Bagong Silangan, Quezon City.

Gonzales was arrested by the police on Feb. 28 after he was wounded in a shootout with Valeriz's men on Commonwealth Avenue. His companion, who remains unidentified, escaped.

The two men were in a hired taxi cab (PYD-949) with 6 females behind the wheel when the police flagged them down for a routine check.

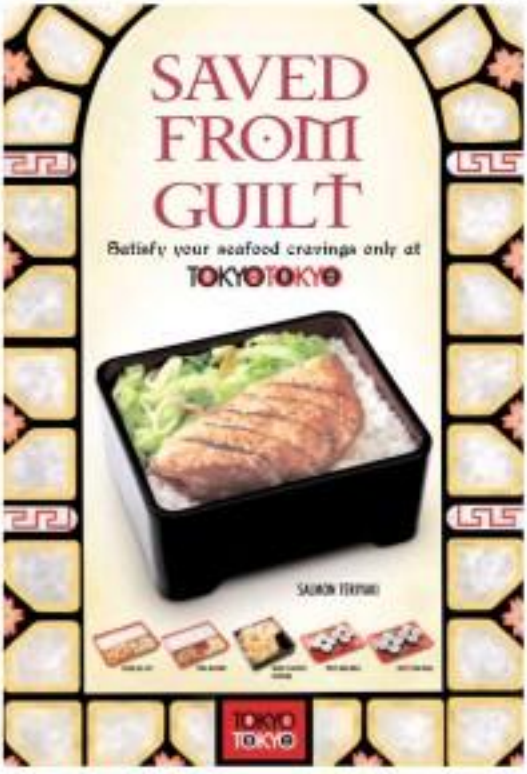
Gonzales, however, immediately sped off, prompting the police to give chase. A shootout ensued when the two men fired at the police who later found in the cab a cell phone which belonged to one of the group's victims.

Valeriz said their battered Gonzales' gang was well-funded and organized because while his team were chasing the cab, a group of men and car tried to block their path and then fired at them at the intersection of Tandang Sora and Commonwealth Avenues.

"They have a backup vehicle and escort to for getting rid of pursuing policemen," he added.

On March 8, just a few days after Gonzales' arrest, the police impounded another Xenon taxi cab after its driver, Hospicio

FULL A2



Lim to ban swimming in Manila Bay

By Erika Sauler

THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF MANILA will prohibit swimmers in Manila Bay in line with the Department of Health's warning about the health risks posed by bathing in its waters, Mayor Alfredo Lim told reporters on Wednesday.

Lim also asked Rafaelito Garayblas, secretary to the mayor, to find out if residents can use for free the swimming pools at the Army Navy Club or in the city's sports centers in Ermita, Havana and Balagtas.

The DOH earlier recommended a ban on swimming in Manila Bay, saying it is polluted with fecal coliform chemicals that could endanger people's health.

Lim said signs warning people against swimming in the bay would be put up in the area.

The mayor added that many people go to Manila Bay because they cannot afford to swim in resorts or private pools. On weekends, the bay is full of people seeking a respite from the summer heat.

NBI agents nab 2 men making fake peso bills allegedly for congressman

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation have arrested two suspected members of a syndicate making fake peso bills and seized some P1 million worth of fake bills and equipment used to making them.

One suspect claimed they were ordered to make P100 million worth of the fake money by a congressman in Samar and added that they have already disposed of about P1 million worth of the fake bills.

At a press conference yesterday, NBI director Nestor Mantaring identified the two men as Armando Reloya Tinsion and Pulgencio Gonzaga Penado, both residents in Sta. Cruz.

Mantaring said they have also launched a hunt for Ben Zulueta, who allegedly asked the two men to manufacture the fake bills.

Asked if he sent past elections could have something to do with the manufacture of the counterfeit money, Mantaring stressed that Tinsion's allegation implicating a congressman has yet to be verified.

Joint teams of the NBI Bonifacio, Arrests and Surveillance Division (BASD) and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) arrested Tinsion and Penado in a raid on Tuesday at the Bebon Tower in Pasay City, by virtue of a search warrant issued by Pasay City Regional Trial Court Judge Sidonio Ramirez.

The teams confiscated 1,114 pieces of fake P1,000 bills and two pieces of fake P500 bills as well as printing materials.

Tinsion admitted to taking part in the manufacture of the counterfeit money and said that they were offered P5,000 for every million they could produce.

"Ben (Zulueta) drops by the place twice every week to pick up the fake money. We have already turned over P1.5 million to him but he returned P900,000 because he said they were not perfect," he said.

"I asked him who wanted the fake money and he said it was a congressman from Samar, then he told me not to ask any more questions and just do what I am told to do," he added.

BUDDING VIDEOGRAPHER
A young boy with a make-believe video camera trains the lens on passersby on the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City. AKIN QUIBA

Ateneo student's family wants homicide raps vs driver

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE FAMILY OF THE ATENEO Grade School student who was killed after he was hit by a van on campus asked a Quezon City court yesterday to upgrade the charges against the driver to homicide from reckless imprudence resulting in homicide.

The beloved student was killed willfully through the deliberate unlawful act of accused Ms. Teresa Scoggin Torres. She must be held liable for the killing of the victim, 10-year-old Julian Carlo Miguel "Jamil" Alcantara...said in their seven-page motion to Judge Jose Ibrahim Jr. of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 107.

"We want it to be upgraded to homicide because we believe there was an intent to kill. It's up to the accused to prove that it was not intentional," one of the lawyers, Manuel Aquino, said.

Based on the lawyers' motion, Torres, also known as Ms. Teresa Torres-Gaspi, was driving at more than 20 kilometers per hour when she hit Jamil.

"The accusation of accused in committing her son's misfortune by driving the van in the manner of a car in a drag race caused the collision of Jamil was certainly willful and deliberate as there is no way that it could have occurred from an inadvertent lack of precaution on her part which is the definition of reckless imprudence," they said.

Homicide, Aquino pointed out, presumes an intent to kill on the part of the accused, while reckless imprudence does not.

"How would you explain that she was driving at such a high speed ... not paying regulations at the time about it was just negligence?" he asked. Torres was not in her assigned parking lot but this was near to March 16.

During a closed door meeting in Bautista's office afterward, Torres asked the boy's father to forgive her.

"She asked for my apology. I asked her if she has forgiven herself. She only replied a bit sad that she was drunk," Alcantara told reporters, adding they were hurt as parents.

Torres said she has resigned from her job as a professor in the university.

She added that she wanted the case to move as a homicide for which drivers who are convicted face six years and one day to 12 years imprisonment.

He added that he wanted the case to move as a homicide for which drivers who are convicted face six years and one day to 12 years imprisonment for his boy

US, China move to defuse military tensions

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT Barack Obama on Wednesday invited Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi to the White House as both powers tried to defuse military tensions and focus on stabilizing the global economy.

Obama is to take the symbolic step of meeting the foreign minister—which is standard protocol but has been used sparingly by previous presidents—on Thursday after his talks with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner on Wednesday.

White House spokesperson Robert Gibbs said Yang would first meet national security adviser James Jones, then go with him into talks with Obama, adding that a row over a US surveillance ship off China would be on the agenda.

"I don't think it will overshadow it, but I think the president will convince us under these new economic positions," Gibbs told reporters.

Gibbs said Obama's talks with Yang, who also met former president George W. Bush as foreign minister, would also focus on the global economic crisis.

Yang came here to work with Clinton and Geithner to prepare for the G20 summit of industrial and developing nations next month in London where Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao are to meet for the first time amid efforts to solve the international credit crunch.

State Department spokesperson Robert Wood said it realizes that the two sides would not let disputes distract from common goals.

He acknowledged "elements that come up that cause some tension. But the most important thing is that the US and China need to work together to solve a whole host of issues that do transmission-community conditions."

The spat between Washington and Beijing began after the Pentagon said Chinese vessels had harassed a US Navy ship in international waters in the South China Sea.

Beijing hit back on Tuesday, rejecting that account and demanding the United States cease what it called illegal activities in the area.

The two sides have also been sparring over the last two days over EU exportations of concern over China's human rights record in Tibet.

But Clinton, after her talks with Yang, said the pair agreed to work to prevent a similar standoff in the future and stood by her approach to not let human rights concerns interfere with progress on the economy and other areas.

"We both agreed we should work to ensure such incidents do not happen again in the future," Clinton told reporters after her two hours of talks with the Chinese foreign minister.

She said she also wanted to make sure there would be no "unforeseen" consequences emerging from the standoff. AFP

AL-ZAIDI

Iraqi journalist who threw shoes draws 3 years

BAGHDAD—THE IRAQI JOURNALIST WHO threw shoes at then-President George W. Bush was convicted on Thursday of assaulting a foreign leader and sentenced to three years in prison, lawyers said. He shouted "long live Iraq" when the sentence was read.

The verdict came after a short trial in which Muntadhar al-Zeidi, 30, pleaded not guilty to the charge and said his actions were an "instinctual response to the occupation."

Some of his relatives collapsed and had to be helped out of court. Others were forcibly removed by security forces when they became unruly, shouting "Down with Bush" and "Long live Iraq."

Al-Zeidi could have received up to 15 years in prison for hurling his shoes at Bush in December during a joint press conference with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

But Defense lawyers said the judge showed leniency because of al-Zeidi's age and clean record. Many Iraqis consider al-Zeidi a hero for defiantly expressing his anger at a president who they believe destroyed their country after the 2003 US-led invasion. Thousands across the Muslim world took to the streets to demand his release. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Church leaders battle NY bill to open abuse cases

ALBANY: Catholic and Orthodox Jewish officials in New York are mounting an intense lobbying effort to block a bill before the state Legislature that would temporarily lift the statute of limitations for lawsuits alleging the sexual abuse of children. A powerful proponent that has been spurned in past years by Republicans who controlled the state Senate, the bill is now widely supported by the new Democratic majority in that chamber, and for the first time is given a good chance of passing. It signed by Gov. David A. Paterson, a longtime supporter. The bill would let victims of sexual abuse file lawsuits against their abusers or institutions that employed them, which is now barred because the statute of limitations has run out. The bill would also create a one-year window for victims whose claims have already expired to file suit. AP

Stanford not cooperating in $8-B fraud probe

HOUSTON—Allen Stanford, the billionaire Texas financier at the center of an $8 billion fraud by 20 companies, has refused to cooperate in the government's probe, a court filing showed on Wednesday. The US Securities and Exchange Commission has charged Stanford, two of his top aides and three of his companies with operating a long-running fraud involving high-yield certificates of deposit. He is also accused of misappropriating $1.6 billion in investor funds. "I hereby assert my privilege against self-incrimination under the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution and decline to testify or provide any recording, and will continue to decline to testify, provide an accounting or produce any documents," Stanford's lawyers said both in the Commissioner's complaint," he said in a document dated March 6 that was filed in US District Court in Dallas. Reuters

US gunman kept list of those who wronged him

JASPER, ALABAMA—THE GUNman who killed 10 people and committed suicide in a rampage across the Alabama countryside this week had struggled to keep a job and left behind lists of employers and co-workers he believed had wronged him, authorities said.

The lists found in Michael McLendon's home included a month-planner that had listed him to resign years ago and where he ended up killing himself on Tuesday to end the rampage, District Attorney Gary McAliley said. Also on the list were a mortgage factory from which he suddenly quit last week and a poultry plant that suspended his worker, McAliley said on Wednesday.

The pages were from a spiral notebook included names of co-workers who he felt had wronged him, including one who reportedly had his car wrecking car plugs, another who made him dress a meat grinder and a supervisor who didn't like the way he cut pork chops, McAliley said.

"We found a lot of people he wracked with, people who had done him wrong," said McAliley in an interview outside the charred house where the two-page began.

Investigators offered no immediate explanation for why McLendon targeted relatives and others who weren't on the list as he fired more than 200 rounds in a roughly 30-kilometer trail of carnage across two counties near the Florida state line.

The district attorney said a piece of paper found in the house he shared with his mother also included the names of nine lawyers in the area. He said McLendon apparently wanted to hire a lawyer in a dispute with members of his family over getting a family Bible returned to him, but details weren't clear.

McLendon began his killing spree across three southern Alabama communities by hunting down his home, and ended it by taking his own life at DeKalb Woods, where he worked until 2003, McAliley said he believes McLendon had planned more victims at the Pilgrim Pride plant in Enterprise, where his mother worked, and the plans he recently quit, Billy Woods in Ella. AP

MCLENDON

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MERCURY DRUG - OPERATION BIGAY LUNAS 2009

True to its commitment of helping keep the nation healthy, Mercury Drug, once again carried out its annual Operation Bigay Lunas last March 1, 2009 that benefited more than 120,000 patients nationwide.

This undertaking is part of the comapany's effort to give something back to its customers by extending the gift of wellness during the celebration of Mercury Drug's 84th anniversary.

Operation Bigay Lunas is a simultaneous, one-day free clinic that provides free medical services, health consultations and medicines to patients nationwide. Since its launching in 1999, Operation Bigay Lunas has provided free medical assistance and medicines to more than a million patients nationwide. This undertaking is made possible through the cooperation of its business partners, provincial governors, doctors, nurses, LGUs and other volunteers.

The "OPERATION BIGAY LUNAS" is part of Mercury Drug's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to improve the quality of healthcare in the community.

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozo

The WORLD

Germans ask 'Why?' after school slays

WINNENDEN, GERMANY—Flags flew at half mast across Germany on Thursday as the rumbled nation mourned the 15 mainly women victims of a teenage gunman in a picturesque town.

Hundreds of candles were left outside the school in Winnenden where 17-year-old Tim Kretschmer picked off nine teenagers and three teachers before killing three other people in the town then turned the gun on himself after he was surrounded by police.

Churches were packed for special services held late Wednesday and dozens of people held a vigil outside the school on what Chancellor Angela Merkel called "a day of mourning for all of Germany."

"Our thoughts go out to the families and the friends. We are thinking of you and we are praying for you," she added.

The local page of the local paper, the Winnender Zeitung, was just a black-black page on Thursday, with a single word: "Why?"

The same question was being asked on the streets and in the churches of the town north of Stuttgart.

Heidi Lorber, a salesperson, said: "There is more violence than there was 10 years ago. I do not understand it. This is a boy who had finished his studies and began a training course."

Police have given no motive for the slaughter. Eleven of his 12 victims at the school were female, and nearly all were reportedly shot in the head.

Kretschmer went into one classroom three times, the Bild daily said. On the third visit he told the class: "Aren't you all dead yet?" A teacher threw herself in front of a female pupil...and was shot by the gunman, Bild said.

Herbert Reul, interior minister of the southern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, said there was nothing to indicate that the teenager held a grudge against the school.

After leaving last year, Kretschmer had enrolled on a course to train as a salesman. He regularly worked out at the gym and belonged to a sports club.

"He was completely unremarkable, there was nothing in his background to suggest this could have happened," the minister said.

Kretschmer came from a prosperous family. His father is a successful businessman who employs 150 people, according to media reports. His parents and sister, still in shock, have been taken to a secret location, German television reported.

Moreover, he hoped to do Made so fit in as school and had few friends. "He was simply not accepted by anyone and just sat all day in front of his computer," a school colleague identified as Mario told German television station N24.

Reports also say he was obsessed with computer shooting games and had become a crack shot. It appears most of his victims died from accurate shots to the head. AFP

KRETSCHMER receiving an award for a table tennis competition in 2004. AFP/DB

Sunday 15 March 09

WALK for PEACE for Children with Jean Béliveau

123,000,000 steps for peace

A well known Chinese proverb says: A journey of a thousand miles begins with one small step.

For Jean Béliveau, he knows this to be true as over the last eight and a half years, he has traveled through six countries and has completed 23,000 kilometers, equivalent to 123,000,000 steps to go to the next two years.

On August 16th, 2000, Jean Béliveau started his journey from his native land of Montreal, Canada, His goal to walk around the planet to promote "peace and non-violence to the youth of the children of the world".

This journey will take a total of 11 years to complete and this coincides with the United Nations proclamation, 2001-2010 / International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

Starting off with US$ 1,000 in his pocket, Jean has much of his trip relying on the kindness of strangers. He is traveling alone with a three wheeled stroller to carry a bit of food, his clothing, a First Aid kit, a small tent and a sleeping bag. Jean plans to walk across all the continents, from North America to South America, then across to South Africa, up to Europe, then the Middle East, South and Eastern Asia, Australia, New Zealand and finally back to Canada.

He has been greeted by Nobel Prize figures like Nelson Mandela, Oscar Arias Sanchez and Adolfo Perez Esquivel.

In the Philippines, Jean's 123M Adventure will begin on February 15, 2009 and will end in Cagayan de Oro City in late April. While in the Philippines he promotes the welfare of street children through his chosen charity: Virlanie Foundation Inc.

Virlanie Foundation is a private, non-sectarian child caring institution. The foundation cares for more than 300 children in homes which provide food, clothing, shelter, education, and love to children who need special care and protection.

Jean invites Filipinos, especially children, to join him on March 15, 2009 for Walk for Peace for Children. The walk will be at 7am and will start from Ninoy Aquino Monument heading towards the CCP grounds, to end at the Luneta Grandstand.

For inquiries or to join the walk, please contact Jean Béliveau at 0917-5311-123 or visit Virlanie at the Luneta Grandstand.

Virlanie
www.virlanie.org

Jean Béliveau and Virlanie Foundation thank the following companies and their employees

INQUIRER HSBC SMART

■ 'I'll beat Manny at his own game' /A30

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

■ Magic rout Bulls, gain playoff slot /A31

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San Miguel, Purefoods dispute solo PBA leadership tonight

By Marvey R. Castillo

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'I'll beat Manny at his own game'

HATTON: Pacquiao fan

By Roy Luarca

RICKY HATTON BELIEVES HE HAS A distinct advantage when he tangles with Manny Pacquiao on May 2 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Hatton, who is ranking his International Boxing Organization light welterweight crown, claims he is completely familiar with the way Pacquiao moves and fights.

He said he has watched all of Pacquiao's previous bouts, including the Filipino's dog-eat-dog knockdown to colon-addled foe in his younger years and his eighth-round stoppage of Oscar De La Hoya last December.

Hatton told Fightnews.com on Wednesday that he had watched videos of Pacquiao's fights until the wee hours of the morning. He said the Gen. Santos lefty is one of his "absolute favorites" to emulate.

For all of Pacquiao's brilliant fluid style, immense stamina and ferocity, however, Hatton thinks he's got the flair and style to topple the Filipino superstar from his perch as the world's greatest pound-for-pound fighter.

On fight night, the Briton said, he would come to the ring.

"I am in the ring to do a job and that job is to beat Manny at his own game," he said in Fightnews.com.

The 30-year-old Hatton, unbeaten at 140 pounds, was particularly impressed with Pacquiao's "clinical demolition" of De La Hoya.

"He cut him (De La Hoya) down and barely got touched on the onlookers," noted Hatton, adding he's willing to pay just to watch Pacquiao.

"Great fighters can punch and land and not get punched."

Like Pacquiao, Hatton said he loves to spar and train hard for every fight. He would be to the best shape of his career when he battles Pacquiao, he added.

Solar Sports feels profit pinch in PBA coverage

Network cuts pay, requests discounts

By Manuel V. Castillo

JUST INTO ITS SECOND CONFERENCE AS official television rights owner of the Philippine Basketball Association, Solar Sports has started doubting the jaw dropping values asking the Philippine Basketball Association for a reduction in its royalty payments.

Drastic steps taken by the network in the past weeks have allowed even those in the rank and file, who experienced pay cuts of between 10 and 50 percent.

"The games' analysts and announcers were not spared, many of whom had their pay-per-view reduced by as much as P1,000, according to several sources in various levels of the league who all spoke on condition of anonymity.

To top it all, Solar formally asked the PBA recently for a 25 percent discount on the original price of royalty it offered the league last year so how game media network ABS-CBN for the TV rights.

UAAP broadcast rights

A PBA source said Solar Sports made the "preposterous" request as the network an issue mention a huge draw to acquire the rights to broadcast the UAAP basketball games.

The royalty reduction does not sit well with some board members and league officials, though, in the light of the PBA experience with old cowboys ABS-4, IBC-13 and Vice Entertainment, which still own the league a combined P400 million.

"On one hand, they are asking for discounts here on, while on the other, they know especially the fact for a big amount for the UAAP," one of the sources told the business. "The board feels that they do not live."

In seeking a 25-percent discount, Solar Sports felt there was a flaw in the contract which it claimed prohibits the network from marketing advertisements from direct competitors of Solar in the league.

Solar marketing and sales VP Jude Serrano said that the pay out were done because his company just went back in "normal Solar rates" after allowing the television talents and personnel to keep their old ABC-5 rates.

"Our target for the first conference was very high, and we didn't hit it," Serrano told the Inquirer on the phone. "The result was breakeven and management wants to make money out of this.

Old production cost

"Since our projection (for the Fiesta Cup) is just a little bit higher than the first (Conference), the only way for us to make profit is to go back to the old production cost."

A separate source said the board is not inclined to grant the request since the 25 percent discount is a far greater sum compared to the lesser of ads from the teams' cooperation.

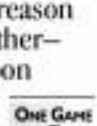
The PBA and Solar Sports agreed to a package of P560 million a year or P480 million for the league's three years. ABS-CBN had offered just over P530 million for the same span.

Solar Sports is also asking for a change to the payment scheme that would make the network turn over royalty money to the PBA biweekly in the second half of each year.

"The board will likely decide to stick to the (signed) scheme," said one of the sources. "And for 20 percent discount that they are asking for it is way over the realm of the president (advertising) spends in question here."

TEAMWORK? Jeff Reyes and Eddie Laure collide in mid-air as they pull down the rebound for Rain or Shine in last night's game. ALEXIS CORCINO

Let's reason together—soon



Jer Sarmenta

IF YOU LOOK AT it squarely, the disagreement between the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission are to be expected, regardless of the personalities involved.

It's like any discussion that dollies out corporate or academic departments or two groups of enthusiasts have when deciding on what course of action to take.

Or, it can even be like two or three sides of a family deliberating on how to handle an emergency or to prepare even the simplest of vacations.

Because sports is the national and international glue that draws in the public domain and public funds and expectations make for an interesting, if not volatile concoction, there is an inevitable schism that ensues.

The media has a duty to report the discussion points not only because it is interested in the conflict that makes for spicy sports page reading.

Specifically, regardless of the level of passion and interest in Philippine participation in international competition, want to know what kind of team will represent them.

* * *

There's a downside, though.

The athletes and coaches residing in camps get cooped all right and, depressing and disuse it as intrigue that has no place in the seemingly ideal world of sports.

They will board it as "politics" without at times fully understanding the issues real its use.

It's like young family members watching their elders argue back and forth over major or even minor incidents or activities.

* * *

From a preparation standpoint, this could be disastrous. Some coaches rate an athlete to be at peak performance by the previous time of competition.

One coach I know ducks his team's preparation for a basketball game from the moment practice ends on the day before to the time they go out for the warm-up on game day.

Athletes are also like veteran movie or television actors who cue switch on reactions on cue even after long hours of waiting for camera and lighting set-ups to be completed, or public announcements who smile up more handed a microphone.

They need to know when they will compete and will work on a program vein the end in mind of being at their best the moment the starting gun fires or the umpire puts the ball in play.

* * *

A coach telling an athlete waiting for accreditation and a uniform, "Relax, it looks for Uncle he could't," just doesn't work out that well any more in this era of previous sports preparations.

Many of our athletes have their bodies become their talents was not enough to match the long-term preparation of opponents who know very ahead of time that they would compete.

Skeptics may say that the athletes should grow up and get used to policy or decisions being sometimes of matter-to-topic.

That's easier said than done.

Being mostly young and unaccustomed to many ways of the world, they cannot be expected to immediately understand the way public sport plays out. Even if most of them are student-athletes, their growth prevents them from being completely tolerant of the workings of adults.

So the sake of the athletes, perhaps it is best that we shorten the amount of time we discuss the issues in public.

This is so that the athletes who are indeed going to Laos or anywhere else can get their bodies, skills and minds focused on the tasks at hand.

RP Davis Cuppers: Anywhere but Pakistan

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FOR SECURITY REASONS, THE 1969 Philippine Davis Cup team has asked for a venue other than Pakistan in its Asia Oceania Group 2 second-round tie.

With the aftermath of the March 3 attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in the Pakistani city of Lahore still reverberating in the international sports community, Philippine team officials said it would be best not to hold the tie in Pakistan.

Philippine Lawn Tennis Association vice president Randy Villanueva said there may be a possible reply to their request to the International Tennis Federation to move the best-of-five encounter to a "neutral ground"—if holding it in the Philippines is not possible.

In a victory handover yesterday for the national team, which scored a 4-1 triumph over Hong Kong last week, Villanueva said the ITF could decide on the venue by next week.

He noted that the March 6-8 tie between Pakistan and Oman was played in Muscat after Oman lodged an appeal to move it out of Pakistan. The Pakistanis parenthood it.

Oman made the same request to the ITF on the security concerns.

Pakistan Tennis Association head Hasseeb Abbas was quoted on Internet reports as saying they still try to keep the tie in Pakistan.

"We know that the situation has worsened after the attack on the Sri Lankan cricketers," Abbasi was quoted as saying. "But ... we will try our best to convince the (Davis Cup) authorities to let the tie take place in our country."

Davis Cup host Cecil Mamiit said the country has a pressure issue this time in fellow Filipino Treat Conrad Huey and local team Eli Tiono and Francis Casey Alcantara.

"The Hong Kong experience was the one not of what's to come for Philippine tennis," said Mamiit, whose epic 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 7-6 (10), 9-7 victory over Maurice Ingia in the first reverse singles last Sunday sealed the deal for the RP Cuppers.

The RP team also expressed its confidence to play in all the ties this year.

SPORTSWATCH

Mt. Parumao derby blasts off in Pasay

A SELECT GROUP OF TOP GOODIES GEARS UP FOR BATTLE TODAY in the Mt. Parumao 3-Cock Derby with more than 80 fights on tap at the Pasay City COOP.

Topnotch contenders will be fielded by local Gerry "Boy" Fajutna, Tito Sevilla, Jaime "Jimmy" Bautista, Pepito Pilapil, Placido Fausto, Patrick Antonio, Doc de Vera, Ramon Manemanis, Ernie Ngamotsuan, Eddie Buenaventura, Tony Lanuza, Rudy Atienza, Charlie Bayocot, Danny dela Cruz, Lito Roque, Raymond Velasco, among others.

A guaranteed prize of more than P600,000 is at stake, said Fajutna The Mt. Parumao 3-Cock Derby fires off at the venue on March 28.

Allen David cockfest at SJC tomorrow

MORE THAN 80 FIGHTS ARE SET FOR THE "ALLEN DAVID CUP" 3-cock derby tomorrow at the San Juan Coliseum.

Official entries must be submitted today from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Weight limits are from 1.8 kilograms to 2.4 kg, said Allen dela Cruz, a member of the SJC Gallistic group.

Up next at SJC is the Kick Out Joint Anniversary 6-Cock Derby, hosted by the group of businessman Joe Almeda on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday next week.

Almeda said a guaranteed prize of P1.5 million is at stake.

RACING

By Top Choice
At San Lazaro LP

UAAP AWARDS

New heights for GM Gomez

By Cedrif F. Tupas

GRANDMASTER JOJES PAUL GOMEZ OF La Salle made history last night when he bagged a fifth UAAP Athlete of the Year award in ceremonies held at the Bulwagang Alumni in the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman.

The steel-thin Gomez won the biggest one on a night where the Most Valuable Players of the different UAAP seasons were gathered for garnering La Salle to the men's chess title and emerging as the country's ninth Grandmaster during the Chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany.

The 23-year-old mechanical engineering student, who set a record by becoming the first athlete to win the AOY five times, topped the local qualifying for the Olympiad team which later wound up 46th overall.

Sharing the limelight with Gomez was University of Santo Tomas high school volleyball star Alyssa Valdez, who was selected AOY in the juniors division. Valdez was part of the Philippine team that saw action in the 7th Asian Youth Girls Volleyball Tournament in October last year.

Gomez beat the likes of 2007-2008 AOY and University of the East female Michelle Brizuela, swimmer basketball star Rabeh Al-Hussaini and former ram-tiner Addison of the East Leica Diezmo of University of the Philippines and surprise contender Ben Mendiorin of UST, who won a gold medal in the Asean University Games last June.

UST also received the 11th straight senior division general championship trophy and 26th in school history, after taking nine of the 20 events contested in the 2008-2009 season. The Espana-based school also grabbed its third straight juniors overall title.

The eight-time standard the recipient of the hearing rights from UP to the Taurons U, which was represented by incoming president Anton Monfredo.

GOMEZ: Fifth Athlete of the Year plum

Venezuela batters deal US 1st loss

TORONTO—VENEZUELA AVENGED A crushing loss to the United States with a gritty 5-3 win on Wednesday, taking top spot in Pool C and grabbing the countercoup going into the second round of the World Baseball Classic.

Venezuela was finished 15-6 on Sunday but turned the tables on Wednesday by pounding US pitchers for 12 hits, handing the Americans their first loss of the 16-nation event.

Venezuela and the United States, who had already clinched berths in the next stage before the game, now head to Miami for the second round where they will be joined by Puerto Rico and Japan to complete the Americas bracket.

The other pool that begins play on Sunday in San Diego is being viewed as a "group of death" with Olympic gold medalists South Korea, WBC champions Japan and Cuba, the winners of three gold and two silver medals from the last five Olympics.

Australia faces Mexico later on Wednesday in Miami City. Reuters

Man Utd boots out Inter Milan

LONDON—DEFENDING MANCHESTER UNITed marched a painful old wound for Alex Ferguson by knocking Inter Milan out of the Champions League on Wednesday, as Barcelona mauled Olympique Lyon, 5-2, in a rivalling return to form.

Arsenal made it four English teams in the quarterfinals for the second successive year after beating 10 Roma, 7-6, on penalties.

United beat Inter Milan 2-0 at Old Trafford thanks to headers early in each half from Serbian Nemanja Vidic and Cristiano Ronaldo.

United and second joined Liverpool and Chelsea, which scored contrasting wins on Tuesday when Bayern Munich and Villarreal also went through.

The result gave United a record of 23 matches unbeaten in major European competitions.

Vidic's early goal left Inter needing last-one goal to edge ahead and they very nearly got it, with Dejan Stankovic twice going close and Diego Milito went heading against the bar.

Barcelona led Lyon, 4-0, at the Nou Camp after Thierry Henry had struck twice and Lionel Messi and Samuel Eto'o joined in the fun.

THE LAKERS' Kobe Bryant (right) challenges Boston's Tiny Pitoy. —

Magic rout Bulls, gain playoff slot

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—The Orlando Magic clinched an NBA playoff spot by beating the Chicago Bulls 107-78 with a big bonus from the bench on Wednesday.

Securing a playoff berth has been a formality for more than a month for the Magic, and they'll almost surely lock up a second consecutive Southeast Division title in the next few weeks, having started the day with a 10½ game lead over Atlanta.

Tony Battie had 20 points and eight rebounds, J.J. Redick had 13 points, and Marcin Gortat added 13 points and 15 rebounds in reserve for the Magic, who have won five of their last six games.

John Salmons had 16 points and eight rebounds, and Brad Miller added 11 points for Chicago, which shot a mere 35.4 percent from the floor and had 18 turnovers.

Heat 107, Celtics 99

At Miami, Dwyane Wade scored 32 points, including the game-sealing 3-pointer with 3:41 remaining, as Miami held on to beat Boston.

Jermaine Oneal scored 13 points and grabbed eight rebounds for Miami, which ended 10 games behind Atlanta for fourth place in the Eastern Conference. Jermaine O'Neal scored 12 for the Heat.

Ray Allen hit his first six shots and finished with 27 for Boston, which fell two games behind Cleveland for the team's best record. Leon Powe had 23 points and 12 rebounds for the Celtics, who have lost two straight.

Hawks 100, Jazz 93

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored 31 points and Josh Smith had 22 points and 12 rebounds to help Atlanta end Utah's 12-game winning streak.

Flip Murray scored 11 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter for the Hawks, who have won three straight. Smith ended the evening with a pair of free throws with 24 seconds remaining.

Deron Williams led the Jazz with 20 points and nine assists.

Complete results: Atlanta 100, Utah 93; Orlando 107, Chicago 78; Philadelphia 93, Toronto 100; New Orleans 98, Washington 89; Boston 99, Miami 107; Golden State 109, Minnesota 104; Memphis 79, LA Lakers 102; Houston 90, Denver 93; Milwaukee 96, New Jersey 103; Portland 89, Cleveland 94; San Antonio 113, Sacramento 105

'I'm ready to win, yeah'—Woods

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS HAS SET HIS sights on victory at this world's PGA Championship despite making his first appearance in a semifinal event since his astonishing playoff win at the US Open nine months ago.

The world number one shot down his 2009 season in mid-June to have reconstructive knee surgery before returning to the PGA Tour in late month's WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship.

"I'm ready to win, yeah," Woods told on-top of that, the 33-year-old has always loved playing at Doral, posting three victories here among its top-five in just six appearances for an aggregate 50-under-par total on the flat, palm tree-lined layout.

In his hotly anticipated return to the game in the Arizona desert two weeks ago, Woods was encouraged by his form despite losing to South African Tim Clark in the second round.

"Everything was better than I thought," the 14-time major winners said. Reuters

WOODS: Glad to be back

Gorres, Melindo battle former world champions at Waterfront

By Dennis Principe,
Contributor

GORRES

LAHUG, CEBU—FILIPINO BOXers Z Gorres and Rillan Melindo are looking to score some thrilling wins in their respective fights Saturday night to prop up their bids for world title shots this year.

Gorres and Melindo will battle former world champions Roberto "Mako" Leyva of Mexico and Muhammad Rachman of Indonesia, respectively, in a major double-header at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu.

"I feel strong as a bantamweight," said the southpaw Gorres during yesterday's press conference. "All I want to happen now is to double the sting and for all of you to see how I prepared for this fight."

Gorres (29-2-2 with 15 knockouts) will be making his first fight in the 118-lb class. As a super flyweight, Gorres challenged but failed to dethrone Mexican world champion Fernando Montiel two years ago in Cebu.

Leyva, from Baja California, Mexico, parades a record of 25 wins, 6 losses and 1 draw with 20 knockouts and is a former world minimum weight champion.

"I prepared many days before I ran light in the division. I still want a title shot and I know a win against Gorres will give me that opportunity," said Leyva through interpreter and Philippines-born trainer Lee Baltes.

The Gorres-Leyva clash is for the WBO-Oriental bantamweight crown set for 12 rounds.

Melindo, meanwhile, refuted Rachman's pronouncement that he intends to make Melindo his stepping stone for another stab at a world crown.

"I'm a counter-puncher so before he knocks me down I'm going to knock him out," said Melindo, who is unbeaten in 17 fights.

On the undercard, Filipino Rey Loreto will square off against Indonesian Ardi Pelupessy in a 10-round featherweight bout.

Also fighting on the undercard are Filipino Jerry Tomogan and Indonesian Ferdinand Mokoginta in a 10-round lightweight bout; Filipino Jeffrey Mariscal

SPORTS

ROW WITH PSC

Peping briefs IOC's Rogge

By Jure Navarro

THE SPAT BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission has reached the attention of the International Olympic Committee.

POC spokesperson Arly Remonde yesterday said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. and IOC head Jacques Rogge talked about the row in private Wednesday night during a lull in the Olympic Council of Asia Congress in Kuwait.

"I was able to explain our situation and he commended our actions," said Cojuangco, in a text message to Remonde.

Aside from backing Cojuangco, Remonde said Rogge assured the POC president that the IOC will closely monitor the ongoing strife between the POC and PSC chair Harry Angping.

"The IOC has given its commitment to support whatever project or move the POC will take," said Remonde after no common talk with Cojuangco.

ROGGE

Remonde said Rogge has dedicated four days, the IOC's most influential Olympic committee celebrant, director, to keep a close watch on the case.

Mia's not the same official who mastered the republic between the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas and Basketball Association of the Philippines two years ago.

Remonde said Cojuangco will brief Mia on the dispute before the POC chief goes home from the OCA Congress on 16 today.

Cojuangco had earlier raised the possibility of an IOC sanction on the country due to what he said was virtual government intervention by the PSC in the selection of athletes for international competition.

Harry sits down with Frank

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE INITIAL STEP TO RESTORE PEACE IN Philippine sports was taken yesterday when Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping sat down with Frank Elizalde, the International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippines, in a three-hour breakfast meeting in Makati.

No details about the discussion were revealed by both parties, but Angping said the meeting was "very pleasant."

Elizalde, who directly reports to the IOC, was one of the signatories of a recent resolution asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to let Angping due to the agency's new policies which the Philippine Olympic Committee said smack of government intervention in sports.

The meeting was brokered by the President's brother, directing president Ari Macapagal, who narrowly lost to the ousted POC policy committee boss Arly "Peping" Cojuangco.

"He (Elizalde) is very happy that I avoided the Task Force," said Angping, referring to his decision last Wednesday to dissolve a new swimming group that was supposed to scout for new talents in Mindanao.

The group did not have the blessing of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association.

Angping said he had already signed a check for P450,000 to fund the training of United States-based Olympic hopeful Sydney Pouliopoulos.

After sanctioning the recent Dave Ogrylo withdrawal by where FR Alex Cruz (Filipino) moved to RP), 4-1 vote, Angping said it was agreed that should approve the POC, which also accused him of bias against FR-Art athletes.

"This is the first step toward reconciliation," said the PSC chief, adding he holds no grudge against POC members who signed the resolution. "It's just a matter of talking because we only have a different approach to things."

PSC Women in Sports gets off pad

IN CELEBRATION OF THE International Women's Month, women athletes and employees of the Philippine Sports Commission will participate in female-oriented or female friendly and leisure, livelihood and women's rights.

"The PSC strives with all success in proclaiming the important role of women in family and the nation as the nurturing head of family, future champions and leaders," said sports commissioner Akiko Thomson.

Every Friday this month, beauty and wellness, medical check-up, yoga, belly dancing and Jazzercise as in sports and recreation, health and family and women's right will be held at the PSC Rizal Memorial Pool.

YES, SHE CAN! A participant in the Nike-sponsored Best Center basketball clinic burns ball control by dribbling with both hands. Assisted by former national coach Nic Jorge 20 years ago, the Best Center sure scientific methods and specialized equipment to teach basketball to youngsters and develop them into top basketeers of the future. The clinic also helps kids develop character-forming values like discipline, courtesy, self-confidence, leadership, resilience and fair play. For inquiries, call 7721001 or ok. 11 16288 or 9 14711 (Nike clinic).

Adamson pair tops PCSO beach volley

ANGELA BENITEZ AND LILIEL ANDAGAN of Adamson University defeated University of the East Team D's Ginalber Jocsapalan and Mary Abigail Bonanlac, 22-0, 22-20, Sunday to bag the maiden title in the 2009 PCSO-Philippine Collegiate Beach Volleyball tournament at the sand court of the Cuneta Sports Center in Bagumbayan, Taguig City.

Showing the explosiveness of their pool meeting, Benitez and Gatis prevailed unscathed over 20 other teams in the women's division to bag the championship.

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Arora Alba, Contributor

CdO listing opens as SBP five search intensifies

THE DIAMOND BOOSTERS, BOTH PHILIPPINE-based in search for the country's representation to the World Youth Olympics in Singapore next year, with the opening of registration booths for the SBP-DMM Supermalls in Gaisano in Cagayan de Oro today.

The listing, now in its second week, began with the Davao registration, which will run until March 15. The SBP visits in Davao regional competition from March 20 to 22, while the Cagayan de Oro tournament is set March 27 to 29.

Boosters need five members, with at least one player standing at least six feet to join the tournament. Each division is slated to represent the country in the World Youth Olympics next year in Singapore. SBP executive director Bibi Eala said.

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nuñeza

BUSINESS

₱50-B stimulus program gets rolling

CURRENCIES

PESO DOLLAR RATE

₱ 48.61 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 12, 2009

STOCK MARKET

Stocks close 1.1 percent lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.1 PERCENT LOWER YESTERDAY, pulled down by the bleak economic prospects in the United States, dealers said.

The composite index fell 21.15 points to 1,879.67.

Twenty-five issues advanced, 51 fell back and 67 were unchanged as the all-shares index lost 0.8 percent to 1,730.20 points.

Some 758.5 million shares worth ₱1.2 billion changed hands.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell 0.6 percent to ₱2,270. First Philippine Holdings Corp. slipped 0.6 percent to ₱26.50 while Ayala Land Inc. fell 5.7 percent to ₱6. AFP

Private sector says infra projects coming

By Abigail L. Ho

TWO PROJECTS UNDER THE P50-BILLION PRIVATE sector counterpart of the stimulus package has already been finalized and would be set in motion within the next few weeks.

Donald Dee, chair emeritus of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said one of the projects that has been identified was the extension of the North Luzon Expressway to Carmen in Pangasinan.

To be done in three phases, he said the project's first phase should be able to take off by next month and completed within two to three years.

It would be more than ₱8 generated by private funds, with the rest to be funded by the government, he said.

"Part of the project is development, so it's not viable. That's why we

PAGE 4/FIGURE B1

Consumer outlook still pessimistic

By Michelle F. Remo

FILIPINO CONSUMERS REMAINED a pessimistic outlook for the near term—both on their families' financial condition and the state of the economy in general—given lingering concerns over the global turmoil.

The only piece of good news is that their level of pessimism has eased.

This was according to the First Quarter 2009 Consumer Expectations Survey (CES) of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which showed that the overall consumer confidence index during the quarter stood at -25.7 percent.

This was better than the -32.1

CONFIDENCE B4

IN THIS ISSUE

- San Miguel's P38.8-B bond offer gets SEC nod /B2
- Gov't debt hits P4.2T /B6

San Miguel's ₱38.8-B bond offer gets SEC nod

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMission (SEC) yesterday approved San Miguel Brewery Inc.'s (SMB) much-awaited debut in the local bond market, paving the way for the auction of up to P38.8 billion worth of corporate bonds on Monday.

SEC Secretary General Lakshmi yesterday said the offering of fixed-rate corporate bonds was approved by the corporate watchdog in seven hours morning yesterday.

With the approval, bankers involved in the fund-raising exercise said the auction of the bonds could take place on March 16 through a Dutch auction, in which the price of the offering is set after taking in all bids and determining the highest price at which the total offering can be sold. In this type of auction, potential investors state their bids for the number of shares they want to purchase, as well as the price they are willing to pay.

Banking sources said the three-, five- and 20-year bonds to be offered by SMB would likely carry yields at a spread of 225 to 300 basis points over comparative rates at the Philippine Dealing System Treasury Fixing (PDEX), the pricing benchmark for the secondary trading of domestic securities. The spread has narrowed from the original price guidance given to institutional investors.

SMB, the cornerstone of diversifying conglomerate San Miguel Corp., has hired an army of banks to arrange the issue, led by British bank HSBC and the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines. Other lead underwriters are Standard Chartered Bank, ING, BDO Capital, First Metro Investment, BPI Capital, Chinabank, Land Bank of the Philippines and Philippine Commercial Capital.

Because of the huge demand for the issuance coupled with ample liquidity in the local financial system, bankers said SMB could lower its cost from the bond-raising exercise to below 8 percent a year.

Proceeds from the offering will be used to pay for the tangible and intangible assets that SMB will buy from its parent company. The initial offering is P20 billion but could be raised to as much as P38.8 billion to cover the entire commercial borrowing requirement.

Philippine National Bank

Issuance of
PHP Long Term Negotiable Certificates of Time Deposit due 2014 (the "Issue")

Offer Period: 12 March 2009 to 20 March 2009

(Offer Period subject to change without prior notice)

Summary Indicative Terms of the Offer:	
Issuer	Philippine National Bank
Instrument	Peso-denominated, Long Term Negotiable Certificates of Time Deposit (the "CDs")
Deal Size	Minimum of PHP 3.0 Billion, subject to upsize depending on market demand
Tenor	Minimum 5 years + 1 day
Indicative Rate	8.25 % to 8.50 % per annum Final rate to be determined before the close of the Offer Period
Interest Periods	Quarterly, 30/360, commencing on 30 June 2009
Maturity Date	31 March 2014
Maturity Value	Issue Price plus unpaid accrued applicable Interest
Denominations	Minimum of PHP 500,000 face value and increments of PHP 100,000 thereafter
Issue Price	100% of the face value

The summary terms presented are not exhaustive. In making an investment decision, prospective investors should rely on their own examination of the Issuer and the terms of the offering of the CDs, including the merits and risks involved. Prospective investors should base their investment decision on the Offering Circular which contains information material to the conduct of the Issue. Copies of the Offering Circular may be obtained from either the Issue Arranger or Selling Agents.

Arranger and Selling Agent

Deutsche Bank
Manila Branch

Selling Agents

ALLIED BANK · First Metro Investment Corporation · Philippine National Bank

Retirement age

Corporate Securities Info

Raoul J. Palabrica

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER.

So says the advertisement of some companies that target people whose ages are not included in the numerous list of freely-written or are rescinded on use the (honorable?) to do of senior citizens.

The age values a person is obliged to retire from active employment depends largely on the population profile of a country.

In countries with low population growth, it is not unusual for people in their mid- or late-sixties to work part time to jobs that are normally manned by younger adults.

Rather than pay high wages to attract workers of preferred ages, the companies make do with older willing to take on the task for lesser pay for financial reasons or just to keep busy.

In our country, the situation is different. The high birth rate and heavy turnout of college graduates make available to employers a large pool of manpower resources.

There is no dearth of people who can replace those obliged to compulsorily retire at age 65 or optionally at age 60, depending on the policy of the company or government office concerned.

Position title

The question of whether the retirement age prescribed by a company for its employees should be applied to all without distinction was brought before the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The company's retirement policies provide that all employees, regardless of position or designation, should retire from the service upon reaching age 60.

It so happens that the company president had reached that threshold and the company wanted to know if it is required to give him his walking papers.

The company believes its president should not be considered an employee, but an executive officer as provided for in the by-laws of the corporation.

In support of its position, the company cited the ruling of the Supreme Court in "Gregorio vs. National Labor Relations Commission" (219 SCRA 615) which differentiated an employee from an executive officer.

The decisive factor, in part, that "the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer are commonly regarded as the principal or executive officers of a corporation ... and other officers are sometimes created by the charter or by laws of a corporation."

The court explained that no "office" is created by the charter of the corporation and elected by its directors or stockholders, while an "employee" is generally one employed by an action of the directors or stockholders but by the corporation's managing officer.

Qualifications

The SEC agreed with the company's stand. It ruled that the president may continue his term of office despite reaching the compulsory retirement age provided for in the retirement plan.

The legal basis for its opinion are Section 23, 25 and 27 of the Corporation Code, which spell out the qualifications that a president should possess to enable him to perform the duties and responsibilities of that position.

In a nutshell, ownership of at least one share of stock and election to the board of directors through the vote of the stockholders are the essential elements for a person to be elected company president.

A stockholder is barred from becoming a director, and later president, if he has been convicted by final judgment of an offense punishable by imprisonment for more than six years, or a violation of the Code within five years from the date of his election as director.

The SEC stated that neither the law nor the company's by-laws prescribe any age limit for the assumption and continuation in office of its corporate officers.

From the facts of the case, it was clear the president is an executive officer, not an ordinary employee, and therefore is not covered by the company's retirement policy.

Concerns

Beginning from the case discussed above, the determination of an employee's true retirement age has become a contentious issue in private companies and government offices.

Some government officials have been required to request changes in their dates of birth, as recorded in official documents, when they are close to compulsory retirement.

The usual approach is to claim that the indicated date is erroneous and that the correct one is two or three years later.

The private sector is not immune to this practice. The higher the position in the corporate hierarchy the stronger the temptation to engage in a belated correction of the birth certificate entry.

The success of this scheme depends largely on the degree of influence of the soon-to-be-retired person over whoever has the authority to order the correction.

In the government, a court order approving such amendment is required. In the private sector, a written note from a key management officer often suffices.

If the adjustment is allowed, the requesting party not only gains additional years to his life, but also the opportunity to continue receiving for an equivalent number of years the benefits that accrue to his position.

When loads of money are involved, twisting the truth about retirement age does not require a lot of conscience struggle.

Age is just a number? Yes and more, especially if it means extra years of income, perks and privileges, and bigger retirement pay.

(For feedback, please write to rjpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph)

P50-B stimulus program ...

Turn to page B4

need government support for this. There is no need for a government guarantee on this, just developmental support so the project can be fast tracked," he told reporters yesterday.

He said the project should cost about P100 billion, with the amount already fully committed.

Right now, he said negotiations with landowners were very close to completion, paving the way for the finalization of all land acquisition efforts related to the project.

"The preparations have to be on the ground by next month," he said.

He declined to disclose the other projects that the private sector had identified to be part of stimulus activities as it was still being finalized.

"We hope to come up with two more projects," he said.

President Arroyo last month ordered government agencies to fast-track the implementation of infrastructure projects under the P330-billion stimulus package in a bid to prime the economy.

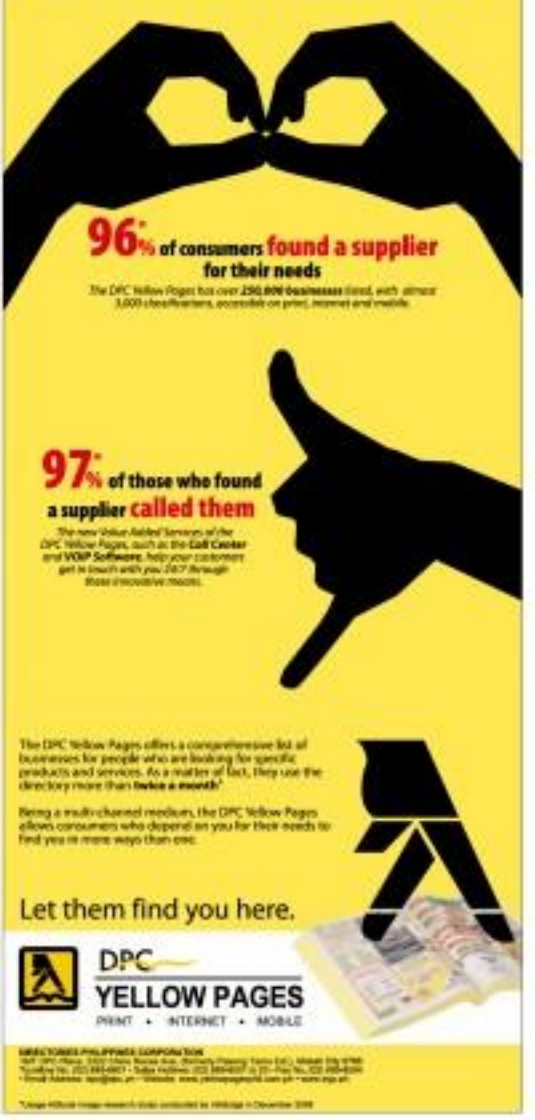
"Under the Economic Recovery Plan, which is our stimulus program, we will continue our unprecedented investments. I direct key agencies to show solid progress in bidding out and/or implementing major infra and social projects under the P330-billion stimulus package," she had earlier said.

A big portion of the P330 billion fund would be used to bankroll infrastructure projects within the first semester.

PRULINK

Investments of Variable Life Insurance Subfunds	PRU LIFE UK* Current Value March 10, 2009	PRU LIFE UK* Last Price March 2, 2009
Bond Fund - Peso	1.11616	1.12889
Managed Fund - Peso	1.76228	1.78903
Growth Fund - Peso	1.37421	1.39974
Equity Fund - Peso	0.49025	0.49591
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.4726	1.4875
Managed Select Fund	0.96320	0.97373
Protection Fund - Peso	0.84001	0.84001
Money Market Fund - Peso	1.06148	1.06588

*Prulink Funds are managed by Prudential Fund Management Limited, a company incorporated in the United Kingdom and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Prudential Life Assurance (UK) is not regulated by the Philippine Insurance Commission.



Ortigas to spend P20B on QC residential project

By Doris C. Dumlao

PRIVATELY HELD PROPERTY developer Ortigas & Co. yesterday unveiled its first high-rise residential community project, the 12-hectare Circulo Verde along Edsa-Balintawak in Bagumbayan, Quezon City, where it is expected to invest about P20 billion over the next 15 years.

The Ortigas group presented the massive plan for the Circulo Verde, which 12 towers with 9,000 units will rise and which the group seeks to develop to be the "best" residential condominium community in Quezon City.

Ground-breaking for the first two towers is set in May, with the first turnover to buyers expected by the first quarter of 2012.

"Our objective is not just to sell condominium units. That's not what this is all about. Ortigas has been known for the last three generations to provide quality communities," said company chief operating officer Jose Ma. Ditching II.

Although the group has developed residential communities in the past, including the high-end Greenhills and Valle Verde subdivisions, this is its first foray into condominium development. But the buildings planned for Circulo Verde, which is nestled along the Marikina River, will also include low-rise (for town houses) and mid-rise structures.

To maximize an ideal ratio of greenery in the property, building densities have been kept low with as much as 70 percent of the land area to be used for open spaces, roads and neighborhood facilities. Building heights are also staggered to allow views of the nearby hills and mountains range and the Metro Manila skyline.

Greg Ruger, principal architect of international design firm RTKL, which is responsible for Circulo Verde's master plan, said the development was intended to be a unique community with condominium spots, space rich in landscaping. "You can walk in the garden and alongside the Marikina River, enjoying the fresh air on your face. Then just around the corner, you can walk into the shops, restaurants, gyms and health clubs. You can be in the midst of a flurry of activities without leaving your neighborhood," he said.

Pool and jogging paths are included in the master plan as well as playgrounds and a variety of swimming pools. There will also be a dog park for canine lovers.

The first phase of development at Circulo Verde covers five residential buildings on a 2.7-hectare area. Previously being developed are the 23-story Felix Towers and the 11-story Milanesa Residences.

The target is to sell at least 200 units in Circulo Verde within the first year. Despite the general caution brought by the global financial turmoil, Dolino said these units will be snapped up by the middle-income market, which Ortigas' looks is targeting.

Consumer outlook . . .

From page B1

percent registered in the first quarter of 2008 and the -40.2 percent recorded in the fourth quarter of 2008.

There were three components to the outlook—an economic condition, family's financial situation and income. The second refers to expectations as to whether a family's wealth or debt level will improve or worsen. The third refers to expectations whether the family's inflow would increase or decrease over the new term, such as by becoming employed or being laid off.

The BSP conducted the latest survey from Jan. 12 to 23. Those were 1,497 households nationwide that were covered by the survey. Of the samples, 2,726 were from the national capital region and 2,703 were from areas outside the NCR.

Bernardo Bird, director at the central bank's economic analysis department, said in a briefing yesterday that the outlook remained negative because people were still generally concerned about reports on the worsening global economic situation.

News reports on job cuts in the United States and other advanced economies where some overseas Filipino workers were based partly led to the negative outlook.

However, Bird said that the decline in the level of pessimism of consumers was noteworthy. The latest consumer confidence index was the highest since the fourth quarter of 2007, when the index stood at 33.6. In the third quarter of 2007, the index stood at -23.8.

Bird explained that the improvement in the index meant that while there were still more pessimists than optimists in the first quarter, the number of pessimists had actually declined and the number of optimists increased.

"The optimists attributed their positive outlook to expected improvement in household finances, lower personal debts, and employment of more household members," the BSP said in the survey.

Net satisfaction rating actually rose, after surging to historic highs last year, was partly credited for the drop to the level of pessimism among Filipino consumers.

Another factor was cases reports that said that Philippines would be better off than other countries in terms of surviving the global crisis.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE INTERIM MCC (JULY 2008 – DECEMBER 2008) AND THE PERIODIC MCC (JANUARY 2009 – JUNE 2010) FOR POWER CUSTOMERS WITHIN THE FRANCHISE AREA WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2008-[illegible] MC

PHILIPPINE CASTING CORP. (PCC),
Applicant.

x-----x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

To All Interested Parties:

Notice is hereby given that on February 27, 2009, the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation, as Market Operator, filed with the Commission the above-entitled application, praying, among others, that the Commission approve the Interim Market Contract Price (IMCP) for the period July 2008 to December 2008 and the Periodic Market Contract Price (PMCP) for the period January 2009 to June 2010 for Power Customers within the franchise area of Manila Electric Company (Meralco), with prayer for provisional authority.

The Commission has set the application for jurisdictional/preliminary conference and initial hearing on March 31, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City. All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the case may file their respective Opposition/Comment on or before March 24, 2009, with copy furnished the applicant and all other parties, and may participate in the proceedings.

Other relief prayed for are stated in the application which is available for inspection during office hours at the Commission's Docket Section, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

Pasig City, March 11, 2009.

FOR AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION:

ATTY. ANNA VALERIE L. CRUZ
Director IV, Legal Service

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF CAPIZ
City of Roxas, Province of Capiz
(032) 62-0-000 local 211

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Capiz thru its BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

Name of Contract : Organic Fertilizer
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : [illegible]
Source of Fund :

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 16, 2009
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 20, 2009 10:00 AM
3. Opening of Bids	April 01, 2009 10:00 AM

1. A notice to post-qualify and subject to the public bidding, bidders should submit to all eligibility requirements as prescribed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRRs) Republic Act 9184.
2. The BAC will issue a pre-qualified bidders eligibility form and other documents to BAC Secretariat Office, Provincial Capitol, Roxas City upon their submission of COR and upon their payment of the prescribed non-refundable fee of P5,000 (Five Thousand Pesos) [illegible].
3. Bidders shall allege that they possess basic eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals or three envelopes in the bid bond as stated in the deadline of submission of bids.
4. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in conformity with and must be in respect of the BAC may take on or before the closing date on April 01, 2009 10:00 AM.
5. BAC Committee reserves no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.
6. BAC Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals or declare the bidding a failure, or not to award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of the invitation.

(SGD.) ANTONIO ARES
Chairman
BAC Committee

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bataan Economic Zone Authority, Mariveles, Bataan
Telephone (047) 237-4454; Fax (047) 237-4455

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority – Bataan Economic Zone Authority (PEZA-BEZA) through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites all interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of [illegible] (Project) with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of [illegible] Pesos (P [illegible]). Delivery is required within [illegible] calendar days from receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP).
2. The PEZA-BEZA Terms invites qualified firms from Eligible Nations to the above-mentioned contract for the Bank Financing.
3. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA-BEZA and inspection of Bidding Documents during office hours from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
4. Bidding shall be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".
5. Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/corporations/cooperatives duly registered with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for the Philippines, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for corporations, Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) for cooperatives and Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) for Ecozone Enterprises.
6. Bidders shall have a minimum experience of [illegible] years in the supply of [illegible] and must submit [illegible] as proof.
7. Bidders should have the following minimum technical specifications: [illegible]
8. Bidders should have the following minimum financial specifications: [illegible]
9. Bidders should have the following minimum after-sales/service requirements: [illegible]
10. Bidders should have the following minimum delivery requirements: [illegible]
11. Bidders should have the following minimum warranty requirements: [illegible]
12. Bidders should have the following minimum payment requirements: [illegible]
13. Bidders should have the following minimum training requirements: [illegible]
14. Bidders should have the following minimum spare parts requirements: [illegible]
15. Bidders should have the following minimum maintenance requirements: [illegible]
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18. Bidders should have the following minimum safety requirements: [illegible]
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21. Bidders should have the following minimum liability requirements: [illegible]
22. Bidders should have the following minimum dispute resolution requirements: [illegible]
23. Bidders should have the following minimum termination requirements: [illegible]
24. Bidders should have the following minimum force majeure requirements: [illegible]
25. Bidders should have the following minimum governing law requirements: [illegible]
26. Bidders should have the following minimum jurisdiction requirements: [illegible]
27. Bidders should have the following minimum miscellaneous requirements: [illegible]
28. Bidders should have the following minimum entire agreement requirements: [illegible]
29. Bidders should have the following minimum amendment requirements: [illegible]
30. Bidders should have the following minimum waiver requirements: [illegible]
31. Bidders should have the following minimum severability requirements: [illegible]
32. Bidders should have the following minimum notices requirements: [illegible]
33. Bidders should have the following minimum assignment requirements: [illegible]
34. Bidders should have the following minimum subcontracting requirements: [illegible]
35. Bidders should have the following minimum confidentiality requirements: [illegible]
36. Bidders should have the following minimum intellectual property requirements: [illegible]
37. Bidders should have the following minimum publicity requirements: [illegible]
38. Bidders should have the following minimum compliance with laws requirements: [illegible]
39. Bidders should have the following minimum anti-corruption requirements: [illegible]
40. Bidders should have the following minimum conflict of interest requirements: [illegible]
41. Bidders should have the following minimum post-qualification requirements: [illegible]
42. Bidders should have the following minimum award requirements: [illegible]
43. Bidders should have the following minimum contract signing requirements: [illegible]
44. Bidders should have the following minimum performance security requirements: [illegible]
45. Bidders should have the following minimum liquidated damages requirements: [illegible]
46. Bidders should have the following minimum retention money requirements: [illegible]
47. Bidders should have the following minimum final payment requirements: [illegible]
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81. Bidders should have the following minimum anti-corruption requirements: [illegible]
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96. Bidders should have the following minimum warranty requirements: [illegible]
97. Bidders should have the following minimum maintenance requirements: [illegible]
98. Bidders should have the following minimum spare parts requirements: [illegible]
99. Bidders should have the following minimum after-sales service requirements: [illegible]
100. Bidders should have the following minimum quality assurance requirements: [illegible]

(SGD.) RONALD T. ZAMORA
Chairman, BAC

Attested:

(SGD.) CHARMAINE G. LAGUNDI
Member, BAC

CERTIFIED BY: (SGD.)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. III-A
[illegible] Avenue, City of San Fernando City
Telefax No. (045) [illegible]
March 11, 2009

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following non-resident alien applicant have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

	Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1.	CONTROPOL ENTERPRISES, INCORPORATED Brgy. Macabo II, San Fernando City	Mr. Youngsoon Kim/ Korean	Construction Engineer
2.	CONTROPOL ENTERPRISES, INCORPORATED Brgy. Macabo II, San Fernando City	Mr. Wuyoung Jung/ Korean	Hotel Manager
3.	CONTROPOL ENTERPRISES, INCORPORATED Brgy. Macabo II, San Fernando City	Mr. Wankee Ko/ Korean	Construction Manager
4.	HANKUK EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC. C. Lopez St., San Luis, Antipolo City	Mr. Nam Sung Lee/ Korean	Dean/Trainer
5.	HANKUK EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC. C. Lopez St., San Luis, Antipolo City	Mr. Seung Young Lee/ Korean	Supervisor
6.	HANKUK EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC. C. Lopez St., San Luis, Antipolo City	Mr. Kwon Hoo/ Korean	Teacher
7.	NESTLE PHILIPPINES, INC. Sto. Niñgalo, Cabuyao, Laguna	Ms. Jane Antonio Mary Grosjean/ Mexican	Key Accounts Group Head
8.	SUNBIRDGEN PHILIPPINES CORPORATION CAP-I Bldg. Canlubang, Calamba City	Mr. Masami Ono/ Japanese	President & General Manager
9.	CO-TECH/ JBU PHILIPPINES CORPORATION PEZA, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Chung-Hee Lee/ Korean	Chairman
10.	HANLIN INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION LOMT Brgy. Mabato, Carmona, Cavite	Mr. Sohn Lee/ Chinese	Cleaning Technician
11.	HANLIN INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION LOMT Brgy. Mabato, Carmona, Cavite	Mr. Kenya Mori/ Chinese	Assistant Technical Supervisor
12.	MTSC WATER TREATMENT TECHNOLOGIES, INC. LOMT-1, Brgy. Mayapa, Calamba, Laguna	Mr. Hiroshi Hasegawa/ Japanese	Technical Advisor
13.	BRADHAM WINDOWS & DOORS PHILIPPINES, INC. 120, Dahlia cor. Yakal Sts., Canlubang, Calamba City	Mr. Venkatesh Rao Reddy/ Indian	Technical Services Department
14.	SUNBIRDGEN PHILIPPINES CORPORATION CAP-I Bldg. Canlubang, Calamba City	Mr. Yoshio Tokitoh/ Japanese	Production Control Division Manager
15.	CHONGLIN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, INC. Mabato, Gen. Trias, Cavite	Mr. Chaochin Lee/ Korean	Driving Range Administrator
16.	NESTLE PHILIPPINES, INC. Sto. Niñgalo, Cabuyao, Laguna	Mr. Rubio Pablo Gustavo/ German	Regional Sales Manager – North Luzon
17.	GLOBE BROADBAND WIRELESS INTERNATIONAL, INC. CAP-I Canlubang, Calamba City	Mr. Richard Keith Vaughan/ American	Program Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application, please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. REUBEN S. MARTINEZ, JR., CESO III
Regional Director

IT-BPO industry to grow 25% in '09, says exec

Food security plan for financial crisis

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

IN THE RECENT UNITED STATES ELECTION, Obama said hope won. But the stock market did not respond as expected. It was argued that only the Wall Street and the developed economies would be badly affected, and that the East and developing countries would escape unscathed. That was wrong. It will only be a matter of time before we feel the pain brought about by this financial crisis.

COMMENTARY

Around the world, jobs are being lost and incomes decreased. In the Philippines, we can add to this the specter of reduced food insecurity.

What food means

There is more than a way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Another way that conveys the same message is to say that to be healthy is to be happy. And to be healthy, one must have good food.

Good food and health go hand in hand. With inadequate and unhealthy food, one is prone to diseases and sicknesses that require expensive medicines. This is difficult to afford during a financial crisis.

Good food and good health are also required to develop the brains of our young population. They are the nation's future. If they are malnourished, their minds will not develop properly and they will only lead the nation to more troubles. Our youth should be well-fed, healthy and bright, if we are to hope for a better future.

What needs to be done

We hear of stimulus packages in different forms. There are grand plans to build infrastructure and increase public schools. But if our people do not have good food at affordable prices during this crisis, the stimulus packages will have limited value. We must have food security plans, but we suggest that a national strategic plan for food security to address this financial crisis should also be formulated and disseminated widely.

What are the key elements of this plan? Three questions should be answered: What food products do we really need? How do we produce them at the lowest cost? How do we make them available and affordable to the people.

Examples

In 2003, when coconut farm gate prices fell to P4/kilo and our coconut farmers were starving, Department of Agriculture Director Dane Espiritu asked the UP Los Baños Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) to select five easy-to-grow vegetables that would provide the combination of vitamins, minerals and protein in a family of six.

IPB did better than that. It identified and produced the foundation seeds for these five vegetables, making them available for only P 15 a packet for each family.

By definition, foundation seeds have at least three successive generations as parent in productivity as the original seeds. Thus, these vegetable seeds yielded enough nutritious food at a very low cost to help feed a family for more than a year.

They were made available to 100,000 resource farmer families, with good result. With today's financial crisis, such a program should be launched on a massive scale. It should include the appropriate low-cost production technology as well as the schemes and distribution networks to reach the resource beneficiaries.

Another example is the promotion of malunggay, which is very powerful in its nutritional content and inexpensive to grow. But how much of the P46.9-billion budget in 2009 (which is 60 percent lower than the 2008 budget) will be used for malunggay promotion?

It is hoped that the promotion of vegetables like malunggay will not be forgotten. This is necessary to ensure food security during this financial crisis. Imagine the good a FOOD SECURITY To...

90,000 jobs seen for Filipinos

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—THE INFORMation technology-business processing outsourcing industry in the country is expected to grow by 20 to 25 percent this year and can hire 80,000 to 90,000 employees, the chair of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) said.

CICT Secretary Ray Anthony Roxas-Chua III said the 2009 growth forecast was based on the "very rapid growth" the sector exhibited in 2008. During the year, the industry posted $6 billion in revenue and created 372,000 new jobs.

"We also expect it to grow despite the global financial crisis because of the many initiatives undertaken by the government, which include subsidies for training, career seminars, making of assessment tools in earnest, free the recruitment process and promotion of the 10 'Next Wave Cities,'" Roxas told reporters.

The CICT chair was among the officials who met with Pernilleen Mangpal-Arroyo at the Cyber City Filipino-Chinese Inn on Tuesday.

Cyber City president Jonathan Rosenberg said that for this quarter alone, the company needed 500 more call center agents.

CICT Commissioner Manolito Ibrahim said the commission's key messages to the Cabinet meeting held here include the country's rise as second to India, outside of Canada, in the IT-BPO market.

"We have put the Philippines in the global IT-BPO map in the last 12 months," Ibrahim said, referring to the inclusion of Iloilo and Bacolod cities in the list of top 31 IT cities of EPWIC, a leading global business consulting firm.

Thailand, a global IT-BPO research group, ranked Cebu number one.

"Hopefully, it's sustainable because the industry is growing. The Philippines has made a name for itself," Ibrahim said, referring to the 30 to 35 percent growth in 2009. That is, however, 20 percentage points less of the 55 percent growth experienced by the sector in 2008.

In the Cabinet meeting, the CICT raised the need for policy changes in terms of legislating laws on data privacy and against cyber crimes.

Students also said university curricula should be re-engineered to include service science and management.

Settling in "Next Wave Cities"—Laguna, Cavite, Bacolod, Davao, Iloilo, Pampanga, Central Visayas (Cebu-Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City), Baguio, Central and Bulacan Towns, Cagayan de Oro and Ilipa—offer lower operations costs, enabling the players to bring the jobs where the people are, Chua said.

Salaries for voice-based agents ranged from P13,000 to P15,000 monthly, Ibrahim said.

Salaries for software development, engineering and legal services are higher, he added.

STA. LUCIA HOMES - *Your every definiton of a good home*

Sta. Lucia Realty & Development Incorporated and Royale Homes Marketing Corporation continue to give the Filipinos winning investments of a lifetime with Sta. Lucia Homes. These modern, stylish and affordable homes provide shelter that are not only perfectly designed but built with the highest degree of excellence.

Sta. Lucia Homes, your every definition of a good home, are committed to unify every Filipino family's dreams under one roof. Each housing unit can be a venue for a mother to have a very comfortable place and move quickly and easily in the midst of cooking task while a father will have peace of mind knowing that the home stands firm through weather and time to walls that promise strength and a roof that shelters a reward for a day of hard work. It is also where Ate, Kuya, and Bunso can express themselves, privacy is felt, and the good vibes are alive! And that's what you call home.

Enjoy all day, relax and feel secured at Sta. Lucia Homes. Choose from our model homes that can be built from 75-sqm to 150-sqm lots that are all fire-constructed with heavy-duty materials that guarantee security for your investment and promotion for your family.

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Sta. Lucia Homes is another flagship project of Sta. Lucia Realty & Development Incorporated and exclusively marketed by Royale Homes Marketing Corporation.

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DILIMAN EDUCATIONAL CORPORATION

Presents

Glenn Doman Seminar

March 14 & 15, 2009

Phil Trade Center, Pasay City

8-12 nn 1-5 pm

* "How To Multiply Your Baby's Intelligence"
* "What To Do About Your Brain-Injured Child"

The registration fee is PHP 2,500 per session

For more information, please visit our website www.gtcsports.net or call 911-6731 local 609 or text us at 09085092852. Look for Mhicks Centre

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Gov't debt hits ₱4.2T

Slightly lower than month-ago level

By Ronnel W Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEBT STOCK SLIGHTLY declined to ₱4.22 trillion in December last year from ₱4.28 trillion in the previous month, mainly due to the appreciation of the peso against the dollar.

Compared to the ₱3.712 trillion recorded in end-2007, the latest figure meant an increase of ₱509.04 billion or 13.71 percent.

Based on estimated 90.7 million Filipinos in 2008, the government's total debt would mean that each citizen has a share of ₱46,537 in it or ₱5,008 higher than in December last year.

The Bureau of the Treasury said 57 percent or ₱2.4 trillion of the total debt was borrowed from domestic lenders. This was 0.4 percent higher than the November level.

The increase was due to the government's selling of debt papers, as it was spending more than the budget available.

In December, government issues increased by ₱10.7 billion or 0.7 percent to about ₱2.4 trillion.

Also, 43 percent or ₱1.8 trillion of the total outstanding debt was denominated in foreign currencies as this was owed to foreign lenders. This was ₱25.7 billion or 1.4 percent lower than the ₱1.01 trillion in November.

The increase in foreign debt was due to ₱9 billion in net repayment, plus ₱12 billion in gains when dollar-denominated debts became less expensive due to the peso strengthening against the dollar.

However, the gain was dampened by a ₱21 billion loss on account of the appreciation of the yen and the euro against the dollar.

Aside from issues intended for the disbursement in cash and official and loans foreign governments, the Philippines also borrows in remittances through the issuance of bonds denominated in dollars, yen and euro.

Exploration firms still bullish

By Amy R. Remo

AN AUSTRALIAN OIL EXPLORATION FIRM operating in the country has expressed interest in another service contract, while two other foreign companies are looking through with their drilling plans for this year.

Investor sources said BHP Billiton Petroleum Pty Ltd. is keen on Service Contract 59 (SC 59), which covers a prospect in West Palawan, southwest of Palawan.

The license for SC 59, awarded by the government in January 2008, is held by Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp.

Also, BHP is finalizing its agreement with Otto Energy Ltd. for a 50-percent stake in SC38, which covers the Matinloc prospect in offshore Palawan. This was estimated to contain 1.0 trillion cubic feet of gas and 367 million barrels of oil.

The sources also said Forum Mobil Corp. is set to drill an exploration well by June, in the Iloilo-Iloilo Service Contract 56.

Forum and Malaysian Bear Hilton Energy Ltd. own the license for SC56.

Shell Philippines Exploration (SPEX) BV is also set to drill a new well by December, in offshore northwest Palawan under SC 46.

SPEX owns a 35-percent interest in SC 46, while the rest is owned by Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Co. (30 percent) and Iloilo-Chinese Resources Inc. (35 percent).

In a separate interview, Energy Undersecretary Raphael Lotilla said that the country was expecting five to seven wells to be drilled this year.

But said both Shell and Forum might be drilling one or two wells this year, while Otto Petroleum Ltd. is seen drilling two new exploration wells.

He said Aboitiz Power and Energy Corp. might also drill one exploration well under SC 40, which covers some 740,000 hectares in Cagayan.

Zest Air expanding

ZEST AIRWAYS, THE FORMERLY Asian Spirit, is planning to expand its operations to include international destinations.

Zest Air director Arthur Aboitiz said in this business in a telephone interview that the airline was looking at possible flights to the Middle East, particularly the United Arab Emirates.

Also the company is interested to fly to Australia to Philippine air authorities enter into air talks with the Australian counterparts to allow more flights between the two countries.

Aboitiz also said Zest Air had active applications with air authorities for flights to Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Korea, Nikoia, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Beijing and Southern Japan.

"We are targeting to start flying to Kota Kinabalu later in the first half of the year," he added.

Zest Airways intends to invest in new aircraft for these flights.

Currently, Zest Air flies from Manila to Puerto Princesa, Busuanga, Tuguegarao, San Jose (Mindoro), Pagadian, Cebu, Calbayog, Catarman and Catbalogan.

By March 16, it will add Puerto Princesa, Naga, Legazpi, Bacolo, Kalibo, Tacloban, Bacolod and Dipolog. Elizabeth S. Gomez

Projects worth ₱484M OKd

A WHOLLY FILIPINO COMPANY and a Filipino-Australian firm have secured approvals from the Board of Investments (BOI) to pursue housing and mining projects worth a total of ₱484.0 million.

The BOI added to its list of registered firms PS Hiraya Realty Inc., which will construct a low-cost mass housing project along Ortigas Avenue Extension in Daraga City.

The ₱320.7 million development, dubbed East Residences Ortigas, involves 1,018 housing units on 11.96 square meters of land.

The proponent is 80-percent owned by PS Aboitiz Property and Development Corp. The remaining 20 percent is held by Davao-based Filipino investors.

The firm has three existing mass housing projects but East Residences Ortigas is its first foray into vertical housing development.

The BOI also approved the registration of Mindanao Polymetal Processing and Refining Corp., owned by Australian Pan Hodson Mining Ltd.

The ₱156.1-million project involves the production of gold at a rate of 301,337 ounces a year in its mine site.

The company will use cutting-edge technology to produce dore that contains the ground gold ore." BOI documents showed. Abigail G. Ho

Food security plan

. . . From page B1

small portion of the DA budget could be used to create programs similar to the "Makiagapay Ka-palay" (09175245050) multi-hotline approach used by former Senator Joey Lina.

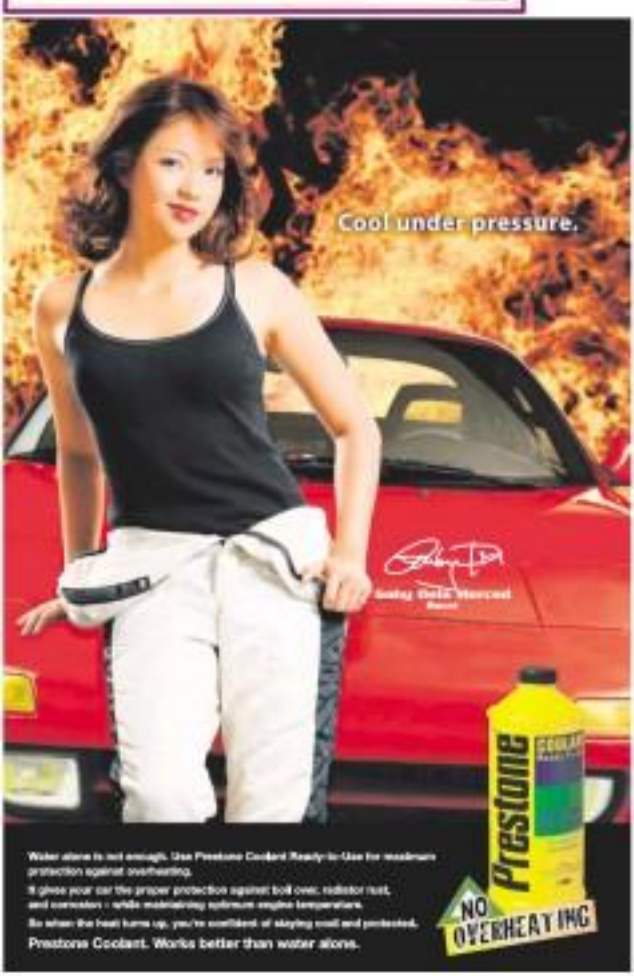
Partnership

"We need a strategic national food security plan to address this crisis. The plan should be done jointly by the public and private sectors, with the farmers and fisherfolk heavily involved so they will have a sense of ownership and will participate in the plan's implementation. Each municipality has its unique needs, and should, therefore, have its own adaptations.

The legally mandated Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Councils have the appropriate public-private sector partnership to formulate this plan. Aries President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to sign the national budget soon. It is imperative that this food security plan be formulated at the soonest possible time. This will guide the use of the DA budget for the right priorities.

The National Agriculture and Fisheries Council, which has yet met for one year and three months, is urged to convene immediately. It should approve as soon as possible a strategic national food security plan addressing the financial crisis that will guide the MAPCs in their particular their own plans. We hope this will be done soon, because time is running out.

(The author is Chair of Agriculture Inquirers. E-mail: agriwatch@philcabos.com or mobile (0918) 8123113)



Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino
BUSINESS Friday

Tourism comes to save the day

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

THE PANAGBENGA Festival gives tourists another reason to go up to the country's Summer Capital

THE TOURISM sector is now creating more jobs in Baguio City despite the economic slowdown.

BAGUIO CITY—IN GOOD times and bad, tourism can be relied on to save the day for this city's economy.

According to the study on the city's tourism sector by the University of the Philippines in Baguio, tourists was the most stable industry in this northern city over the past 20 years, and it could generate jobs despite a global economic slowdown.

Gladys Cruz, a UP Baguio economics professor, said hotel business between 1987 and 2008 was dominated by the service and retail ecosystem.

Nena Internacional Philippines Inc. (TipI) and other export-oriented manufacturers at the Baguio City Economic Zone (BCEZ) have boosted both national and city revenues, but manufacturing represents less than 1 percent of the enterprises of Baguio, Cruz said last week during a session of the Baguio Commercial Conference.

The session explored the business behavior study of Cruz, professor Lenlet Mendoza and UP student Maria Aleli Gorman.

Cruz also said that schools have likewise become major job-creating enterprises owing to the 4-percent growth in teaching staff as a consequence of the 15 percent annual increase in the enrollment in Baguio universities.

Baguio has become the primary university hub in Northern Luzon, Cruz said.

"There is a greater role to be played by the services sector with more schools, hotels and restaurants being established to meet the growing demands of tourists and students ... there is also an increasing number of households operating boarding houses and transient places," the study said.

"The services sector displays a general potential for job generation ... Manufacturing plays a negligible role in the Baguio economy, mostly small-scale, except for [the BCEZ, which has] a high export value but which is currently facing unfavorable global conditions [that has led to] nonemployment and production slowdowns," the study added.

But tourism has been hiding the most number of workers anxiously.

"Truly, an average of 2,189 workers is employed in [the tourism] sector. [About] 10.4 percent of [these workers] hold managerial positions, [while] 89.5 percent are rank and file workers, [with the remaining] 0.13 percent account for [supervisory]," the study said.

The UP study was spun off from Cruz's 1986 profile of Baguio businesses.

Cruz said businesses that operated in 1986 were "mostly family-oriented, small-scale operations [which have] very low [or] employment-generating capacities."

These operations required only very hired employees and often survived because of unpaid family workers, Cruz said.

These establishments also had no formal capital sourcing.

Sales and commercial establishments represented 60.3 percent of businesses that year, trailed by community and social service firms which represented 19.3 percent.

The trend changed in 1999, Cruz said.

Corporations grew and hired an average workforce of 48 skilled employees.

But single proprietors still dominated the business community,... and almost all of their investments were in retail.

The dominance of small firms, however, would wane.

Citing a business inventory conducted by the National Statistics Office between 1998 and 2001, Cruz said the number of Baguio enrollees went down to 60 percent in 2002 from about 75 percent in the 1970s.

The city also documented an increase in business entities from to 11,759 in 2006 from 7,345 in 1986.

But the city still owes many from its tourism because more than 80 percent of the visitors touring the Cordillera road up staying in Baguio, said Gorman.

Agency puts a new twist to rewards

By Angela Flonton
Contributor

THE WORLD OF ADVERTISING IS a frantic one filled with clients to please, talents to cast, artwork to design, productions to shoot, and even media spent to buy for ads meant to grab attention from numerous other competing brands.

Here, the work merges days with nights and Mondays quickly turn into Thursdays.

This is where the ad person draws in put in time, energy and creativity into an account often realizes he or she has not left the office at all.

To manifest ad agency, however, the concept is slightly different.

Quiet pace

The work is less frenzied, workdays are reduced; and employees clean up refreshed and resting to get to work even on Mondays.

Does a place like this in the cutthroat world of advertising really exist? At Bartlet Scissors it does.

Bartlet Scissor, a full service creative agency in Makati, identified during its last strategic planning workshop the company's new mission and vision, the rules of each corporate posture and the work schemes now being employed by its employees.

"It's not really rocket science," says new creative partner Manny del Rosario, referring to this new work scheme.

The work ideals are simple and were put in place only last year as part of the changes in this organization.

Bartlet Scissor, then known as the Nova Thinkers Company, aimed to revolutionize the way quality is achieved in the workplace.

As former CEO Jose Estrella went into semi-retirement, the executive committee which included then client service director Celina Muñoz and finance director Rommel Herrera, both aware of the stringent demands in advertising, strongly believed that change is not only proper but also crucial.

They felt that it was time for the agency to be a team to itself and put on a fresh image of youth, energy and creativity.

Getting the right and competent people to work with, especially at the management level, is one of the steps in being about Bartlet Scissor's new corporate image.

More than over 20 years of experience in account management and strategy development for local and international brands, crossing 28 product categories.

With skills honed in McCann Erickson and Ogilvy & Mather Philippines handling blue chip accounts like IBM, Nepi, Boehringer Ingelheim, BMW and Bristol-Myers, Nicasio is all set to be Bartlet Scissor's new managing partner.

Team spirit

Shannon Alvarez Herrera, on the other hand, has over 20 years of experience in finance starting 8 out of 10 CEOs Co. and later expanding to various industries like cement manufacturing, TV broadcasting, metals trading, construction, and in recent years, advertising. He will soon be Bartlet Scissor's new finance partner.

Then it took several months of searching before Del Rosario, a multi-awarded and respected creative director with a sterling 15-year career in advertising, joined Marina and Herrera as Bartlet Scissor.

Del Rosario is the brains behind the critically acclaimed "Salamin Ads" of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Pan Pacific's "The Itty Life Should Be."

Less is more

With quality as Bartlet Scissor's guiding light in carrying out its business, a number of cuts and trims had been made—much like a wig being pruned to perfection.

At the company's reorganization, the management kept employees whom they felt should stay on and who can measure up to the challenges and ideals of the new organization.

Del Rosario believes that the process headcount of 35 at Bartlet Scissors is just right.

Those same people also enjoy a half-day workweek every Friday, the weekend officially starting Thursday night...with Friday as the new Saturday.

"Longer weekends allow more quality time with families, an opportunity for self-enhancing activities or simply sleep done," says Makati.

Reinvigorated, people tend to look forward to the coming week and produce quality output for the agency. However also sees how less or working days paves cost-effective for the office.

At Bartlet Scissor, where less is more, and quality the driving force, rewards in peace measure simply couldn't be left.

GOINGS-ON

Smart wins 5 awards

SMART COMMUNICATIONS INC. (SMART) garnered five awards at the 2008 Stevie Awards, dubbed the "Oscar" of Public Relations. The leading wireless services provider received two Excellence and three Merit awards.

Awards of Excellence were given in the "Smart Schools Program Website" and for the "Texts Pa Sa Iloilo ads" of SMART. Merit awardees include "Wiky Pinoy," the SMART Global Access Group's magazine for readers; "SmartSpeak Quarterly," the internal magazine; and "Smart Edwards Open Pa Sa Inter Program," a new project of SMART's flagship education program that provides "labs on 10" by encouraging schools to generate online content about their respective communities.

Meanwhile, Tea Philippines Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) also took home a Stevie Award for the PLDT Annual Report themed "We're Changing Lives."

Magazine cites Jetstar

JETSTAR HAS BEEN CITED AS BEST Brand Experience for Low-Cost Carrier by Ad Asia Magazine, in conjunction with the biennial Asia Travel & Tourism Creative Awards.

This is the first time the magazine gave the award.

Jetstar Asia won the award based on an online survey conducted by Ad Asia Magazine and Purple Insights, an independent research and branding firm.

Respondents were mostly CEO senior executives in the fields of advertising, marketing and media.

The respondents, who are all frequent affluent business travelers, were asked questions about their position, salary levels and travel habits to ascertain their feelings and capture their experience while engaged with airlines and hotels. The result of the feedback then produced the Best Brand Experience.

"We have come a long way since we launched our airline in 2004 and the award has again demonstrated that Jetstar Asia is in the top league of low-cost carriers. The staff of Jetstar Asia is committed and dedicated to a job that they do so well. Our crew has proved once again that they have what it takes to take Jetstar Asia to the skies," said Chong Phil Lian, CEO, Jetstar Asia.

Seminar on soaps set

THE GOLDEN TREASURE SOAPS OF enlightment Program will conduct a seminar on soap making on March 15, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the College of Social Work and Community Development, at Magsaysay Avenue corner Visayas Street, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

Bonus courses include how to make body scrub, foot spa soap, foot scrub, hot powder and hand and body lotion.

For questions call 436-78-28, 0920-631-4411 and 421-75-77 or visit our website at www.goldentreasure-soaps.com.

Putting the brakes on road accidents

By Roger Pe
Contributor

RAIN OR SHINE, THE STREETS OF HO Chi Minh City, the economical hub of Vietnam, are always "flooded."

They are flooded with motorcycles, so to speak, thus making them among the most dangerous for pedestrians in Southeast Asia.

On main avenues, on its French-inspired boulevards, newly built roads, even on narrow alleys, Vietnam is awash with motorbikes of all brands.

In a country with a population that is almost identical to the Philippines, one can be sidetracked by these kings of the road at any unguarded moment.

Neighboring Cambodia is another country littered with motorbikes.

To the uninitiated, the collective drone during sound of these machines is frighteningly deafening.

Alarming

In the Philippines, where motorcycles provide a cheap transportation alternative, one couldn't help but ask: Will our streets go the way of Vietnam? Be invited, but it could happen.

Motorbike sales are on a phenomenal upturn because of low-income affordability and low cost maintenance.

Riding on the crest of this boom is also the increasing glitches of road accidents.

Accidents involving motorbikes are increasingly alarming. There isn't a single week on national TV that you don't hear about accidents involving motorcycles. And God knows how many more are not reported.

In filing a bill banning motorcycles from main thoroughfares and inclosed subdivisions, Pangasinan Lawmaker Amado Espino said that motorcycle accidents have become a public health epidemic.

A World Health Organization study backs the bill: Nearly 1.2 million people, aged 25 years old and below, from all over the world die from road accidents every year.

The report also mentioned that motorcycle accidents in the Philippines rise 40 percent a year.

Effective, creative

In 2007, after spending 8 years of lobbying, the Vietnamese government is to introduce compulsory helmet laws. Ho Chi Minh City-based Asia's Injury Prevention Foundation created a major breakthrough.

The bill is now pushing was finally enacted into law.

The bill was passed not because of statistics on deaths and physical disabilities caused by motorbike accidents but on the strength and effectiveness of an advertising campaign created by Ogilvy & Mather Vietnam.

The ad campaign aimed at changing Vietnamese people's attitudes toward helmets (that they ruined hair and make them look stupid) showed gruesome consequences of accidents when people fail to wear helmets.

Significant drop

Black and white images of crash victims with their skulls in stitches, covered with nuts and bolts were used as print, digital ads and postcards. The messages were reasoned out for not wearing a helmet were printed on them.

Billboards were mounted out on strategically poles but an eye level so commuters noted owners.

TV ads focused on the horrors that befalls on families when caring for a victim (often the breadwinner) who has been physically and mentally incapacitated.

Bus ads were used for the first time in Vietnam, together with a website supporting the campaign. As a result, hospitals reported a significant drop in accident fatalities by as much as 50 percent, with injuries down by 40 percent compared to the previous years.

The new helmet legislation was even brought forward by more than six months, taking into effect last December 2008.

The campaign was Vietnam's first global creative ad winner, honored by Cannes, Clio, One Show and included in the Ciel World Press Awards annual, all in year 2007.

The same campaign was also the country's first IPA Effectiveness award winner in 2008, achieving a higher purpose than just winning creative awards. Winning and changing people's minds.

It also means something big for two Philippine expats in Vietnam: Karmen Wong, current Ogilvy Vietnam managing director and world-class photographer James Domingo.

Scene and noted

Joey Ong. So young and high up the ladder, this newly promoted executive creative director of Saatchi SEL Ong started his career as a "visualizer" for J. Walter Thompson, eventually becoming an art director and associate creative director. He was previously with Jimenez-Basic and Ogilvy Activation prior to landing his new post. Can Joey weave his "Tweet" magic and win us new national award once again? It's been a while.

"If you make it there, you'll make it anywhere," so goes the song. Jollibee has been going places, and its latest conquest is the Big Apple. The Pinoy burger service (uncle Sam's burger Chicken Joy versus the Cincinnati Mango pie versus Apple pie. Will mouthcare dump the Champ? Long hop ang up!

(The author writes for the New York-based Ad Age.)

BUSINESS

BTr raring to move into Ayuntamiento

By Roxanne N. Domingo

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY (BTR) plans to move out of the Palacio del Gobernador and has called on contractors to bid for a P1.19-billion job to restore its future home, the Ayuntamiento Building in Intramuros.

According to Deputy Treasurer Eduardo L. Mendiola, the project will take about two years to complete and will involve the construction of a three-story main structure on top of a ground basement and a four-level annex building.

Mendiola, who chairs the bids and awards committee, said interested contractors must submit letters of intent from March 17 to 24.

Eligible bidders will be announced on April 6, while submission of the technical and financial proposals is set for May 19.

Originally known as the Muddle Palace, the original Ayuntamiento Building in Intramuros was first completed in 1736.

The 3.6-hectare site is at the corner of Andres Soriano Avenue and Cabildo Street.

The Ayuntamiento housed various government divisions of the Spanish colonial regime — including the city hall and central government offices of Manila — before it was damaged during an earthquake in 1863.

During the American occupation, the building housed the offices of the Civil Governor, Philippine Civil Commission, the Executive Department, Executive Secretary and Attorney-General.

The Philippine Assembly, the country's first legislature and Southeast Asia's first popularly-elected national parliament, held its inaugural session at the Ayuntamiento Building in 1907.

Since then, the Ayuntamiento was used as the headquarters of the Civil Service Commission and office of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports under the Marcos administration.

Thrift banks urged to lend more

By Michelle V. Rosco

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) wants more thrift banks to tap its rediscounting facility so they would lend more to small- and medium-scale enterprises.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said that on his, the central bank's rediscounting facility was being tapped mainly by commercial banks.

"Thrift banks service more consumer clients who are intending to buy houses or cars, and eleven operating small and medium-sized businesses. If thrift banks would lend more, then this could help boost consumer spending and the SME sector," Guinigundo said.

And last, the BSP increased its budget for the rediscounting facility from P60 billion to P80 billion.

Under the facility, banks can borrow from the BSP an amount equivalent to the discounted value of their collectibles.

The rediscounting facility provides the banks another credit line even if they still have collectibles.

To allow more banks to tap the rediscounting facility, the BSP said that starting March 2, a bank will only be able to borrow a maximum of P15 billion or 25 percent of its net worth, whichever is lower.

Guinigundo said that by placing a cap, commercial banks would not be able to monopolize the funds available via the rediscounting window.

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RACKS
FLAME GRILLED • FALLS OFF THE BONE
Blackened Salmon Steak
fresh catch from the east

Good discount for pearl lovers at Kultura Filipino

WITH 7,100 ISLANDS, SMATTERING beaches and marine life, the Philippines has some of the most beautiful pearls in the world.

Kultura Filipino has a good variety of pearls—freshwater pearls in classic round, textured rice shapes, coin pearls, baroque pearls, stick pearls—fashioned by artisans into necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings and brooches, some available in three- and four-piece sets.

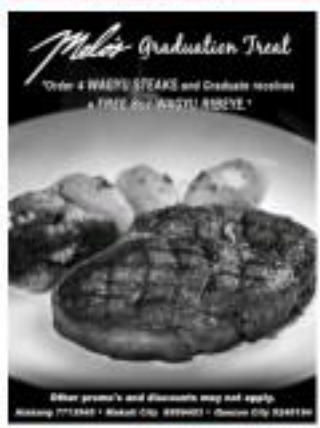
Kultura Filipino also has natural South Sea pearls, considered strong signatures of pearls.

For those who prefer modern accents, there are stylish, uniquely shaped pieces such as dangle earrings, strokes-of-pearl cuffs, and necklaces with iridescent pearl pendants.

This March, Kultura Filipino gives a treat for pearl lovers—20 percent discount on select items. Kultura Filipino stores are at SM Makati, SM Megamall, The Block at SM City Sucat/Alabang, and the SM Mall of Asia.

COLORFUL and uniquely shaped pearl jewelry turn unassuming clasps

BRACELET with iridescently cream-and-gold-colored rice pearls



MARCO Polo Plaza's cabin manager Julie Mae La Empelusa's Cecilia and husband, INQUIRER columnist Jaime Piccerelli

AGE WITH experience... Marco Polo Plaza Cebu's director of sales and marketing Jane Romero, resident manager Nora Lim and PR whiz Bok Zuzolo-Ruiz

TOURISM Undersecretary Phineas Abiera with Cebu's newspaperman and TV host Bobbi Avila

HONEYMOONERS French cousin Michel Lhuillier and Cebu Pacific's Queen Airport's Dantes

EXECUTIVE Chef Luke Gagnon

TOP LEADERS' stars-allines: SM's Chi & Bundoc's with Marsha and Stan Cowles, President and CEO

Macau foodfest at Marco Polo Cebu

THREE YEARS HAS GONE BY SINCE my last visit to Cebu. I was excited to revisit the bustling Queen City of the South, as a guest of Cebu City's only five-star hotel, the fantastic Marco Polo Plaza, which towers high and mighty over the city and is only a 25-minute breeze from the airport, pahinangod.

The moment I walked into the impressive lobby, brightened up by dazzling Swarovski crystal chandeliers, and checked into my elegant grand suite, all I could say was, "Wow, what a view!" At 1,000 feet above sea level, the Marco Polo is indeed the only hotel that offers that breathtaking sight, all the way to the Mactan Channel, dahlings.

It was a memorable welcome when my longtime friend, the gracious Antoinette Llamas Lhuillier, and her family hosted a welcome dinner for me with a handful of friends in their magnificent friend new mansion.

Since I have my night lovers at sleep, I missed the popular Cafe Marco buffet breakfast, but enjoyed the yummy buffet lunch instead. No wonder this resto won last year's Buffet Restaurant of the Year award in Cebu, pahinggan.

What's a trip to Cebu without shopping for sweet, succulent Cebuano mangoes? Or to dine the Filipinas chicharon in Guadalupe market—not for me but for my friend Peppee who snacks on shelled stuff like pork crackings.

Food sampling

That night, I dashed over to the launch of Flavors of Macau, a two-month Macanese food promotion and a joint project with the Macau Government Tourist Office. This foodfest at the Cafe Marco here until March 15, but that night the hotel and Macau restaurateurs had the scrumptious food sampling at the rooftop, in the hotel's unique venue, Ibis Bar & Grill.

We like offbeat al fresco dining with unmatched views of the city lights on one side and verdant mountains on the other. We missed Marco Polo Cebu's dynamic Swiss GM, Hans Hassel, who happened to be out of the country.

But the event was superbly hosted by two indefatigable women, hotel resident manager Arlie Najes and sales and marketing director Lynn Bautista—both Manileñas transplanted to Cebu. Joining us to enchant was former Tourism Secretary Jean Lim Polongco, GM of the Macau tourist office in Manila.

The excellent Macanese cuisine—a blend of Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese and Malay flavors—was prepared by the culinary team of executive chef Luke Gagnon. The spread of exotic dishes included African *chuba*, seafood *cataplana* and endless servings of exquisite steamed rice matched with Portuguese red wine. Yeah, my South Beach diet was promptly tossed out the window.

The Macanese conglomerate, which owns this towering hotel on Nivel Hills, has resorts and casinos all in facilities, amenities and services are deluxe. No wonder the Tycoons is proud of this hotel. The group is headed by tai-pan George S.K. Ho and his good-looking son, Alfred, who takes care of the real estate side of the business. (The other son, Arthur, is the super banker.)

If you haven't done it yet, rush over to Cebu, dahlings, and experience the *arroz caldo*, Hainese de Galeá at the Macau Polo Cebu.

Who knows, you might just win a travel package for two to Macau inclusive of air tickets from Air Macau, two nights' room and breakfast in a five-star hotel and two tickets to the fabulous Cirque du Soleil at the Venetian. What a great summer holiday that would be, pahinggan!

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **WBL** Photo Solutions

My South Beach diet was promptly tossed out the window

DINGDONG Dantes made every kid's time worthwhile with fun and exciting games at Tenazoas

DENISE Lao-Li arranged a surprise lechón Mah Salvador at Tenazoas Obando-4.

JUANA Marie, Johnny Dizon and Omar Arroyo of the Starstar family

Food critic Dr. Nestor Alonso, with Honorable Sonia T. and Louis Thevenin of Les Amis de la France.

IMPERIAL Palace's Herbert Josef Kleinhammer and Albert Bitzing, MPPC food and beverage manager

CASINO DIVA Consul Robert Lee and wife Anna

MARK with his dad Greg, Paul Dizon and debutante Rebecca

Grand debut

What a fantastic way to start the year, pahinggan, with events beauty Rebecca Mark Sudhwani, recently making her grand debut in Cosmo Manila society with a party at the Tsuntsin, Peninsula, Greenhills.

Becca, as she is her family and pals, is the only daughter of business magnate Manjit Sudhwani and the former Gina Gaza—artsy daughter of Southern Roman Gov. Raul Daza and the vivacious Yasmin Bueno.

Although born, raised and educated in Australia, Becca chose to celebrate her 18th lush here with a more simple motif—cocktail outfit for the women and coat and tie for the men. And to highlight the Venetian theme, carnival masks and mini hats were given away to the guests.

The best DJ of the night was the debutante's uncle, Jesse Daza, two-time Philippine DJ of the year (2006 and 2007). Becca's uncle, young and good-looking Raul Daza crowned the affair.

JETTING in from Australia, Mich Lung and Georgie Goldcrift

Celebrity parties

It was a blast at the Shangri-La Mactan's Sharry Boutique when her celebrities-flanking Beatrice and Katelin—"still good friends," they insisted—joined children affected with cancer in trying out Tenazoas's games and fun activities.

For a whole hour, the kids giggled and screamed as they played basketball and air hockey and enjoyed delicious delicacies and kiddie fun rides. BB Herrera played host at this unforgettable event, pahinggan.

The kids were beneficiaries of Gilda Lopez Foundation and Child Haus, groups that support a special ward at the Philippine General Hospital for kids with cancer.

The following week, another happening took place at the same venue when celebrity Denise Laurel arranged surprise birthday festivals for her friend Maja Salvador.

Hey pahinggan, whatever you want to have a good time with pals and family, or give warm happiness to those in need, Tenazoas is always there. Check it out at select malls nationwide.

T) CUNANAN and Bea V. M. Jalosjos

Market! Market!

Market! Market! was recently awarded the prestigious Best Award of Merit for Public Relations Programs under the Community Engagement category in the 48th Anvil Awards. The Public Relations Society of the Philippines, organizer of the Anvil Awards, gave its seal of approval to the mall for its successful Tapestry Bag promotion conducted in July 2008.

The award was received by Ms. Victoria E. Alimurung, Senior Vice President and Group Head of the Ayala Malls. Presenting Mr. Romeo Ilao, Vice President and COO of Ayala Malls. Chairwoman M. Stanzione, Market! Market! General Manager, and Joseph F. Reyes, Market! Market! Deputy General Manager during the awarding ceremonies at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel last February 20, 2009.

The Market! Market! Tapestry bag's aim was to give a rewarding shopping experience to loyal patrons while addressing its social and environmental responsibility. With the help of Gifts & Grocery Fair Trade Foundation, Market! Market!'s old and used tapestry bag were lovingly crafted by people from urban poor communities and a center for persons with disabilities and transformed into reusable and unique carry-on bags. Not only was the mall able to give rewards to its shoppers while providing livelihood to marginalized communities, but also two individuals were disposed of properly and the use of plastic shopping bags reduced - a testament of Market! Market!'s and Ayala Malls' commitment to sustainable development and a greener environment.

From left to right: Ms. Ma. Lourdes L. Espina, APR (Chairperson, 48th Anvil Awards Committee); Mr. Butch S. Raquel, APR (2009-10 PRSP President); Mr. Francis J. Colayco, (Founder and Director, Inspire Leadership Consultancy); Ms. Ma. Victoria E. Alimurung (Senior Vice President and Group Head of the Ayala Malls Group); Ms. Charmaine N. Stanzione (General Manager of Market! Market!); Ms. Rowena M. Tomaldan (Vice President and COO of the Ayala Malls Group); Mr. Joseph F. Reyes (Deputy General Manager of Market! Market!); Mr. Francisco J. Colayco (President, Colayco Foundation for Education); and Mr. Jaime T. Campos, APR (2008-2009 PRSP President

ALLIM the family: Nadine, his father Manjit Sudhwani and mother Gina Daza S. with the debutants

AMONG the 18 young ones who landed Becca a cute were Justin Almeda, Nico Gonzalez, Andre Reyes and Paolo Dragon, in front are Alexis Pajarito and Becca.

WIN! Attend your animal print swimwear to the beach, basic in the sun and glam the seascape with a diamond in store. Check out Robinsons' Ladies Fair this month.

Ladies' fair at Robinsons stores

ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE holds Ladies' Fair until March 21 for safari-inspired ensembles reminiscent of a summer adventure.

Start with white slouch pants, white blouse, your favorite cardstar and black belt and top them off with a safari print jacket. A pair of strappy heels and aviator sunglasses will spice up the look. Match cropped pants with a top or bag with touches of leopard prints, wear a wide-brimmed hat.

Catch the fun-filled school Model Search on March 14-15 at Robinsons Galleria and March 21 at Robinsons Metro East. Watch finalists 27's "Ur Girls" on March 22 and see how the top three finalists will journey through a fashion makeover.

Discover this exciting city with two of your family or friends, indulge yourself in Hong Kong's playground of shopping spree galore, tempting international cuisine and exotic escapes, plus a myriad of festive celebrations and city wide stage events all year round. Whatever you look for in a holiday, you'll find in Hong Kong where non-stop fun and excitement surround you. And you'll enjoy the world-class service of Hong Kong's home airline, plus smooth connections to some 100 destinations worldwide*. Call Cathay Pacific at 757-8888 or log on to www.cathaypacific.ph for more details. For more information on Hong Kong, please visit www.DiscoverHongKong.com

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Time to rediscover –the lunch box!

Survive the crisis with grace and style

THE DOW IS DOWN, YOUR HAIRTIC has reached its limits, and you're fancying delicious refreshing the piggy bank now.

The future of a conservative is looking bleak. But life must dictate to that?

Back away from the cosmic pig! There are ways to save money and still dine out and involve a hamster. All you need is a change of lifestyle and a bit of creativity.

Lets finally takeouts and more packed lunches is a good start. But not your old lunch box we invest in a new one.

There are a lot of cool lunch boxes available that are easy on the budget. Carrying one should be de rigueur for those who work 12-hour days with 30-minute lunch breaks. It's all about savoring the calm with grace and style.

E-mail the author at fashion@inquirer.com.ph

Mabuhay!

Jenni J. Eppersen

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

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SOFIA Coppola carries a calfskin bag

Sofia Coppola designs for LV

I THINK IT MUST BE EVERY woman's fantasy to dream up an ideal bag and shoe," said Sofia Coppola. "I had an idea of what I was looking for and couldn't find ..."

The film-writer-director had just visited the Louis Vuitton museum and factory, where "it is hard not to imagine what you want to create for yourself." Out of the visit, a partnership was forged between LV and Coppola.

The result of this collaboration is a capsule line of bags and shoes with very classic and functional pieces designed to be used from day to night.

Coppola, who currently took part in all aspects of the project, from conceptualization to manufacturing, designs that collections for women like herself who walk around with things to do and places to go to.

"For the day bags, I wanted classic colors that could go with everything and you wouldn't get tired of, but weren't black," she said.

Recession-conscious beauty 'tipid' tips

I WAS TOLD A STORY THAT I'm not even sure to be true, but here it goes. There was a four-year-old boy in a dinner gathering, and upon seeing a cabinet, told everyone his further uses in an hilarious manner. It may sound disgusting and funny, but it made me think...

People do use cabinets as a deodorant and a shield against the dispersing of the cute pies. Afraid it was too stinky, I asked one of my helpers to try it. She said that the cabinet's natural scent disappeared after a few minutes and it wasn't stinky after all.

What a great discovery! If you ran out of deodorant or wanted something

KNOCKOUT! Ria Francisco-Prieto

How to avoid makeup meltdowns

LIGHT and pretty

Go light and easy this summer

FOR MOST OF US, SUMMER and makeup just don't go together. The combination of heat and humidity is enough to scare us away from our trusty foundation and eye-makeup.

Surviving makeup for the warm days means like the logical thing to do. But with inexpensive tips from makeup experts, we may still have a fighting chance against makeup meltdowns. Try these quick and easy ways to longer-lasting, melt-free makeup.

Try a tinted moisturizer instead of foundation. Foundation has a tendency to melt and look heavy after being exposed to heat for a few hours. A tinted moisturizer is a great alternative—"a light, oil-free tinted moisturizer gives enough coverage without the greasy feel," says makeup artist Pia Reyes.

Stear clear of creamy formulas. "Your everyday makeup may not be suitable for the hot months. Creamy formulas tend to melt easier, and can look streaky and messy once you start sweating.

"Instead of using cream blushes, switch to a cheek tint or powder blush, since these are less prone to melting," suggests Reyes. As for your favorite tube of creamy lipstick, Reyes recommends a tinted lip balm instead.

Kelly Misa, Philo of The Truth

Set your makeup right with powder and a fixing spray, to ensure that your face looks fresh the whole day.

"A dab of loose powder over your tinted moisturizer can keep your face shine-free for a few hours. But just in case, keep some blotting paper with you so you can fix the shine," advises Reyes.

Or, use a trick of makeup artists—"mixing a makeup fixing spray, like Kryolan, keeps your makeup in place without melting."

Happy to be home

I HAD NONE THOUGHT I would get homesick as much as I did in the past year. So imagine the relief I felt upon getting my saved documents together (many thanks to Mr. Elliot Mesinger and her team at the Philippine Consulate in New York by the way) and finally flying out for a much-needed break from all things American.

While one is far away, one becomes more aware of what is truly indispensable and precious. On the beauty front, there were the places I had made sure to visit upon my arrival for my month-long stay:

1. The Louis Phillip Rio Salon; G/F, One McKinley Plaza, The Fort, Taguig; 856-6840

In the past, I'd go straight to Louis' salon (hair) upon arrival. At first I thought I just had a personal hairstylist my former boss had her hair done with him for years, and recommended his services. But after I left Cosmo, I would see pictures of friends' hair and manicured (hair balloon, only to find out later it was fine salon had cut and styled them.

2. IG by Neo Day Spa; 35 Wilson St. cor. Washington St., Greenhills, San Juan; 3644789, 0927-7903318

It doesn't matter if you go to Neo at The Fort (8156233) or its IG counterpart in Greenhills, for as long as you have either the Lymphatic Drainage massage and/or the Hawaiian Lomi Lomi treatment (it's rare house kung!). Feel the stress and tension melt away with every soothing stroke and expert kneading of your tired body. Also try the latest Pearl Tranquility Ritual, which makes use of actual crushed pearls.

Hariel Chua, Beauty-aholic Big Apple

3. Jericla 24-hour Home Service and Spa; 4388384, 0923-8396261, 0998-3648790

If you don't feel like leaving the castle, this updated Pinay staple of home-service massage rises to the occasion with professional massage beds brought to your home, and therapists kneading your every aching muscle. The best part? You can call on a whim—they're available 24/7.

4. Dermalogica facial, Urban Spa, 3/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; 687-6185/86, 0919-2837817; Dermalogica at Bonnie's Makati, 813-3730

I honestly think this brand is underrated. It has one of the most amazing, soothing bath and body products. They are unwaxy, light and rich in all the right ways. It makes the shower smell like the spa. And to me, the ultimate indulgence is the pore-cleaning, deep-cleansing Dermalogica facial at the Urban Spa in Shangri-La Mall, or a visit (and a splurge!) at the various in Bonnie's Makati.

5. Nail Spa, 3/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; 6877811, 6874995

Or any top nail salon for that matter. A long and languid manicure and pedicure session dissolves even the last trace of jetlag; imagine sinking toes plumb inside salon surrounded by throw pillows, and soaking up to positively groomed hands and feet. Welcome home indeed!

Visit MyMirrorNow.com

Evoking Hollywood with makeup magic

Isabel Roces, Backstage Pass

GOLD award! "The Godfather" Actor: Clarence Ocampo
Photographer: Paulo Pineda
Stylist: Bea Constantino
Prosthetic makeup: Sohrab Hosseiff & Grace Ong
Makeup: Oscar Ferrolino of Mac Academy
Hair: Ricky Dionisio of Kiehl's
Also won Best Dramatic Transformation

SEEN THROUGH NEWBALANCE way from Hollywood, the Philippines had its own tribute to the recent Oscars.

It was a night of creativity and glamour as 10 Filipino celebrities, photographers, glam and stylists collaborated to relive some unforgettable images of past Oscar-winning and nominated films. The unique photos exhibit showcased ingenious recreations of movie characters as interpreted by our local talents.

"Tribute to the Oscars" was launched Feb. 20 in Ayala Museum. Participants included Alex Ti celebrities Annie Castle, the Cowabuys, Heather Ocampo and Kim Atienza, to unveil the recreated looks from films like "Cleopatra," "The Last Emperor," "Moulin Rouge" and other memorable Oscar-winning movies.

At the end of the night, special awards were given away to those with the most captivating photos, interesting concepts and attention to detail.

The runaway winner of the night was "The Godfather," recreated by Sohrab Hosseiff with Heather Ocampo as model. Their makeup took 7 hours.

"We [Grace Ong and myself] first started by covering Jen. then I face with liquid latex. This creates wrinkles to simulate the age of the character. This was a tedious process of stretching it all while and applying liquid latex, drying it with a fan, and couldn't go to bed like we usually do. Grace then molded Heather's nose with what we call 'Plasto Wax' from Make up Forever, and shaped it to create the nose of Don Corleone. When the shape was performed, it was stuck on with "spirit gum," a glue used for prosthetics and theater makeup.

It then started adding the details—playing with light and shadows, creating volumes on the face such as sagging cheeks and a hollow jaw, and interestingly "fake" wrinkles. I used regular stick foundations of different shades of brown and beiges to make them more lifelike.

After two hours and 30 minutes of detailed working, the mustache was then placed on Heather, set and shaped again to imitate the signature mustache of Marlon Brando.

Meanwhile, by the way, stalled procedures in the Make Up Forever Academy in Pasig.

Other interesting creations included Christian Bautista as Edward Scissorhands and Karylle as the Duchess, which bagged silver and bronze, respectively.

How to stay cool this summer

THE HEAT IS EXPECTED TO get worse and the weather bureau says we will be experiencing a longer summer period. If you do not want your skin history of staying in an air-conditioned room all day, try these quick and easy fixes. The key ingredients to look for are sun, nourished, pepper-mints, rosemary and eucalyptus.

Wrinkle your head with cool water at regular intervals is an age-old method of preventing face stroke as it lowers the body temperature. Freshly washed scalp and hair has the same effect. Menthol-ole shampoos like Head & Shoulders Menthol Chill are ideal for those who have dandruff. Rook & Ivy's Rosemary & Mint shampoo can be used daily; they're ideal for normal to dry hair. Alberto VO5 Tea Therapy Vanilla Mint Tea Clarifying Shampoo is good for oily hair.

Step conditioner limited to hair length and ends as their lotion-like texture will feel sticky on the scalp.

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Sales

Body

Good body cleansers are runny soaps or shower gels like Kiehls Peppermint Shower gel.

The Peppermint line items from Bio Oil is great for legs, feet and arms.

For sun protection, go for sunblocks with SPF 30 and above in a gel formulation like Neutrogena's Fresh Cooling Sunblock Gel SPF 30.

Fragrance

Avoid using perfumes as the smell will be too heavy, especially if you intend to use them as refreshers every hour on the hour. Light floral or citrus can do wonders as mid-day refreshers. Cosmetic brandlines like Clinique's Happy, Elizabeth Arden's Green Tea, Estee & Gardenia Light Blue, Elizabeth Citrus Verbena and Bulgari Green Tea.

New favorites: L'Occitane Jardin Rainy Bloom opens with strawberries, violet leaves and grapefruit with gardenia, jasmine and violet petals at the heart then fades to the base of vanilla and musk. The limited edition has small stickers of all things spring like flowers, ladybugs, butterflies, etc., and is already a bestseller at Stephen New York; L. Bulgari Omnia Green Jade with green mandarin and spring water as top notes followed by pear blossom and jasmine in the heart. Base notes incorporate cypress, blond wood and musk.

Men's fragrance

Due to customer public demand, Burberry's banned fragrance is back! This limited-edition fragrance for men caused quite an uproar when it was out after 2007, as everyone I know who had it used every last drop.

The men's woody aquatic scent has lime, apple and notes for the top note; thyme, grass bush and driftwood at the heart; and cedar, amber, musk and white musk at the base.

Note: There is also a women's version—a green fruity floral.

Rhum is available at the 6H Mall of Asia, Pasiguena, and North Edsa Book & Ivy at Ayala.

NEUTROGENA Fresh Cooling Sunblock Gel SPF 30

BROOK & Ivy's Rosemary & Mint shampoo and conditioner

DOVE PRESENTS 'WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR'

A photo exhibit by Sara Black

"SO, WHO IS THE FAIREST one today?"

Whether, in whatever age, are bombarded with messages about the kind of beauty they should aspire to have at every moment—even as the yardstick for what is considered beautiful continues to change.

Sara Black, famous for her work as a fashion photographer, comes to this never-ending pressure for women to create a fixed standard of beauty through her book "When I Look in the Mirror."

AHHOTO P4

Sofia Coppola does bags

From page B-1

To Coppola, an ideal bag is one that could fit everything she needed, but was neither too big or too heavy and always chic—ever in transition director. The day bag she designed has a lightweight lining, a zipper pocket inside and an open pocket for easier phone storage.

In addition to the iconic lit monogram, Coppola chose her favorite autumnal tones: cobalt and taupe in rich, supple calfskin grained leather and nubuck in soft neutral suede.

All-purpose

"The idea is that the city bag fits all of your things during the day," she said. "And that you can keep the clutch inside and slip it out at night. Or you can do what I do, which is leave the day bag at home and then take the clutch out in the evening. The colors, too were essential: they should be timeless and versatile, but not blah from day."

The collection has three compact clutches for evening: reflective of Coppola's—and most women's—love for going out in the evening with just the basics essentials: lipstick, keys, phone and credit card.

Their exquisitely simple envelope design is set off by stylish squarish-tongues design, reminiscent of the locks used on iconic Vuitton trunks.

In asphalt suede, gold leather or black suede with piping, the clutch also comes in Monogram canvas in a slightly larger version (about double up the day Coppola said Louis Vuitton was in fact initial when she did the monogram pattern).

Having tried out the prototypes herself, Coppola added practical features, like a tiny oval mirror and slots for credit cards.

"For the new clutch, I worked with Fabiola, the shoe expert," she said. "While I was sprinting, dreaming (afraid I wanted), by switch lives it at that same time. That was cool."

CALFSKIN BC bag

Comfort was a key consideration for designs of the new clutch. Coppola's sister Lives her person Pedri said bore Stole, collaborate French women who walk around all day to crazy high heels, but Elsie the chameleon love of easy elegance.

Her idea was to create a "Da version of the '40s satchel, which has a chic narrow wedge, slender subtle strap and rotating pump top.

"I wanted something chic, but not too classy—something that wasn't too high, so easy to walk in went, but looks great on. And you can wear it with a lot of things, so when you travel, you don't bring so many shoes."

The five styles are the perfect expression of Coppola's new day-to-evening look: the pinkish one did in rich shades of baby goat leather and gold-trimmed suede or metallic gold leather and red or black suede with gold piping.

"I like them all, but I especially like the navy-day bag and asphalt gray suede day bag and the black pockets with gold piping with matching shoes—those are the ones that I see the most," said Coppola.

BLACK calfskin BC bag

SOFIA Coppola's calfskin, small calfskin velour pochette

Suede pochette in monogram fabric

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Colored eyeshadow = WOW!

COLORED EYESHADOW IS BACK IN A BIG WAY—and Unlike the chalky consistency of eyeshadows of yesteryear, this season's colors are sheer and shimmery. Brighten your life with a dramatic wash of color on regular days, or layer two more vivid hues for nights out. Don't be afraid to experiment—products like Caroline Quad Eyeshadows come in a set of shades designed to complement each other, making it a cinch to mix and match. (Lifted from 'SOS Magazine, January/February 2009 issue)

Recession-conscious beauty

From page D1

"all natural," then you should try coloring it.

I got e-mails asking me to write about "liquid tips," so I would recommend the cuticoncoct. It is cheap and easily

Another tip is "toner," which can be used by warming ice crystals, then rubbing the solution to your underarms.

To make the most of your lotion or body oil, apply it after you've stepped out of the shower. Although you've patted yourself dry, your body is still damp. It is best to stay in the bathroom when applying the skin care so as to make full use of the "sauna-like" atmosphere. Your skin will absorb the moisture better since your pores are still open.

When having your polish done or doing it yourself, make sure that your nails are clean. Make sure to have the girl swipe your nails with acetone that has water, not alcohol. Alcohol will dry your nails which will also make it hard for the polish to stick longer.

In prolong the shelf life of your beauty products, make sure to store them properly and to seal them well when you're done using them. This also goes for perfumes. Never put them in a place where they will receive direct sunlight.

Ditto with other beauty products. If applied the right way and stored properly, they will last long and you will get the most out of your money's worth.

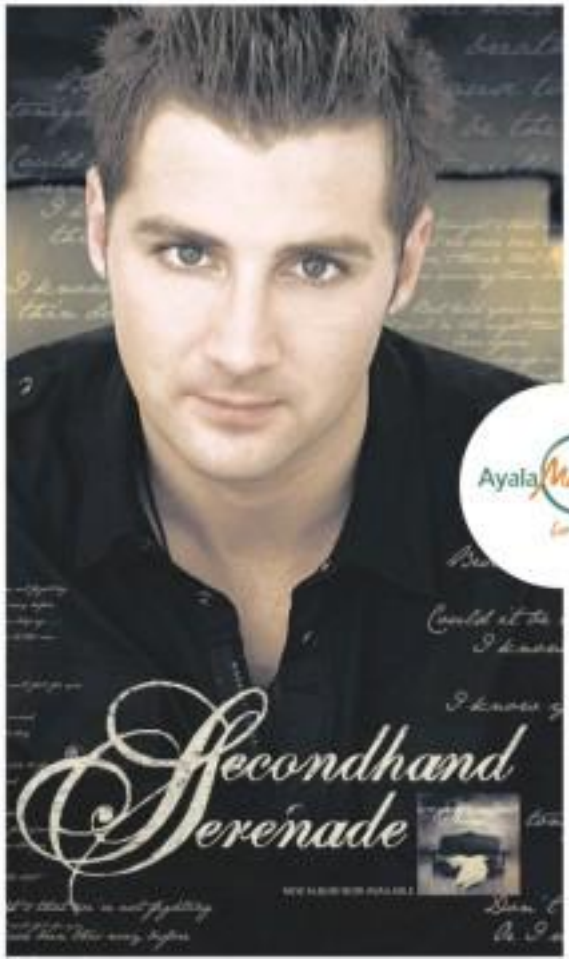
A photo exhibit by Sara Black

From page D3

While it is a book filled with beautiful faces, it is also much more than that, as it literally makes the spotlight on a diverse group of beautiful women and encourages us inspire the reader to accept and celebrate real, unadulterated, air Photoshop and beauty.

Dove, through its Campaign for Real Beauty, gave behind the project as part of its advocacy to promote and celebrate every woman's unique and individual beauty. The book features some of the most unlikely beauties in our midst and holds them up as examples of real beauty, unaffected by so-called standards dictated by society.

"When I Look in the Mirror" will be launched March 18 at The Gallery 2/F, Greenbelt 5, with a photo exhibition showcasing a selection of portraits of the women featured in the book. The exhibit runs until March 22.



LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

EVENING bag with faux wooden handle.

168 revisited

It still lets you shop without the guilt in this gloomy economy

By Jojo Ramirez
Circle Buzz

IF DAVAOEÑOS HAD MBK SEAM Center, Singaporean has Mafaza and Hong Kong has Mongkok, Manila has 168 Shopping Mall as the destinations of those looking for budget buys. You just need the luxury of time to drive to Binondo, Manila. You need at least a day for budget shopping.

It's like shopping in Divisoria, except that this is in air-conditioned mall.

It has two wings—Sin Heng and Soles, connected at the top floor by a food court.

At the ground level, for those on sweaters needs and wear a D.I.Y treatment at home, those foot spa and pedicure to hair spa, 168 has salon supplies at much lower prices. I was able to buy a four-in-one hair straightener with purses cover, brush, metal scraper and file for only P50.

I also saw nice, beaded evening bags (P450 with wholesale price of P300)...very ideal for graduation balls or evening socials to keep your cash, lipstick, small wallet and car keys in.

For those who love colors, 168 has skinny belts, ballerina flats, purses bags and shirts in Kool Aid colors. (Skinny belts for P50 each; shirts for P250.)

And if you, like me, love Christmas shopping at least one month before, 168 has wrapping paper, bows, bags and even snowmen/parawreaths.

For those attending graduation balls or graduating this March, this is where to find inexpensive evening dresses.

For those beach-bound, here is a trove of frilly, summery dresses, from cultures to graphic-printed ones.

A store caught my attention because of its big mannequins; it's called Bil Bil Fashion. As those on the luxury side, Bil Bil has the hottest clothes. At least here, you won't get the feeling "one size fits all" standard style of store owners—dressed cramped, even Thai.

Boy next's food goes Saggie Aquino raves about the new Bhikati branch of Charyn's Thai kitchen. I just had to try this Thai town at 168.)

In these trying times, shopping without the guilt is still possible.

GRAPHIC PRINTED: pastel-colored and tiered flat-knit dresses

By Abhirahmie M. Dadtender

Summer has come not just one but two times. It's scorching hot! Just a few minutes under the sun, you can almost feel the intense heat seeping right through your skin. Ouch! Sunburn ouchless!

But summer for me has always been the season for fun, family bonding and adventure. Especially that my kids are growing up and, unfortunately, we had (might add!). I make sure this summer will always be the time of your life memories. We usually do a lot of outdoor stuff like going to the beach, equally colorful and fascinating festivals, barbequing by the pool, and sometimes a little gardening here and there.

So to keep me and my kids protected from the harsh rays of the sun, I make sure to bring a couple of essentials whenever we step out of the house:

1. A good hat. A wide-brimmed hat is one of the best essentials to protect your face and shield your face from direct sunlight. Quite trendy too, it really brings out the fashionista in me and my girls.

2. Eye protection. I wear wide-rimmed sunglasses to not just protect my peepers but also the sensitive skin around against UVA and UVB rays. Studies also show that it may also help prevent the development of cataracts.

3. Sun protection. Just like our skin, our lips also need sun protection! Lipbalm can go a long way in terms of keeping lips moist and protected. They are often forgotten, with many forever to be application-worthy as often is actually delightful.

4. Water, water and more water. I make sure me and my kids are well hydrated. I start the morning with a glass of water and quite mindful of hydration throughout the day. So, going outdoors means bringing a couple of water bottles. But I don't mind because I can readily replace fluids I am sharing excessive and time under the sun.

5. Sunblock. When I was growing up, getting a tan meant that you were athletic, energetic and healthy. Sad to say, that the reverse being more vulnerable to skin damage. Frequent and prolonged exposures to the sun over time can lead to wrinkles, age spots and skin cancer. That is why I say kids the importance of sunblock whenever they are outdoors. With Ever Bilena Daily Moisturizing Sunblock Cream for the face and Ever Bilena Daily Moisturizing Lotion for the body, I am assured that their skin (and mine) is safe and protected from harmful ultraviolet radiation, both the invisible A and B rays (UVA and UVB) from the sun.

Send your mails to bm.galeon@gmail.com

Jazz wizard performs for young Filipino musicians

By Constantine C. Tejero

CHRIS GILLESPIE, FAMED AS "THE man with the wandering hands," makes sense off from his schedule as an organ player at Mandarosa Bar at New York's legendary Carlyle Hotel to jam for three days in Manila.

His synthesis of jazz and classical music will be based live by Filipinos in exclusive performances in Conway's Bar at Makati Shangri-La on March 13 and 14, and in the concert "Thabo Gillespie Live from The Carlyle" on March 15 at Whitespace, 2324 Chino Roces Ave. Ext., Makati City.

For the concert, Gillespie forms a jam quartet with three outstanding Filipino musicians: saxophonist Ton Talledtan, bassist Roger Herrera and drummer Mar Monzon.

This is for the benefit of Young Musicians Development Organization (YMDO), an organization that nurtures budding musicians aged 7-22 from such as donor to the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band.

CHRIS Gillespie

Gillespie, 44, has always been passionate about helping young musicians.

"We devote some of our revenues when kids are my beneficiaries," he says. "I love kids. You can start at 4th and become a musician, but kids are something else. They have that innocence, and they're not afraid of judgement."

He has an eight-year-old son, Andre, who, he says, has a great sense, but he doesn't push him to be a musician. "If you really have to do something, you don't need me to discipline you. The discipline just comes. If you're really cone in me."

He believes a musician must evolve. "I didn't say I wanted to be a musician. I was just doing what I was doing. What makes me who I am is all the flexibility to evolve as an organist. It should evolve, grow and develop all the time.

"If you put water in a bucket, it does up, otherwise if it's a river it keeps flowing and doesn't become stagnant. If people do the same thing all the time, it gets kind of dull, boring. The fruitiness in Frank Sinatra comes in even during a song he can take, not to mention in the studio."

Reason to travel

Tonight's concert was overpublicized months ago. He then talked with the organizers in May last year, after seeing YMDO executive director and trustee Maja Oliveros-Go.

"The project is why I'm here," he says. "That's the reason I would travel 20 hours—and it's worth it."

That is his first time in Asia. But why Manila? Why not Hong Kong, or Shanghai, for instance?

"It could be anywhere," he says. "It could be on any street corner in New York."

Born of a Dutch father and a Taiwanese mother in Munich, Christopher John Gillespie started with classical music as a kid. At 19, he was listening to recordings of musicals, then got a scholarship in church music.

He had become the organist in his Catholic church, and was at one time thought of becoming an opera singer. He imbibed the musicality of Russian pianists Vladimir Horowitz and Sergiey Rimki, and later jazz artists Bill Evans and Earl Garland.

Gillespie reveals that jazz education was the reverse of what others had been used to. While many first learn, then start playing, he had been playing before he started learning.

"You listen to the styles of other jazz musicians at the end of the day you want to create your own," he says.

At time he has created a personal music he calls "jazzical," a soulful fusion of jazz and classical music notated in his own mediation style. He has composed or reinterpreted what many now consider jazzical masterpieces, such as "Take Five," "Alone Together," "They Can't Take That Away from Me."

Most of the time, though, he is improvising. "That's the most important thing to jazz—you're improvising. It should come from the heart. If you're being intellectual about it, you're ruining the game. You've been to get hurt, you have to feel the pain. If you play it as an intellectual, it's same as a trick, or a monkey's—but...have you lived?"

Freedom to interpret

The lessons or others he has to put down on paper what he's improvising is when the music becomes too complicated, such as when his left hand is playing Bass thumbs while his right hand is doing fluids.

He has about 30 music compositions, plus scoring for the film "Women Who Could Be Summoned" and the forthcoming documentary "Wall Street Conspiracy." He is accompanying of doing a Miss Bodoom, which he says can be jazzy but wouldn't swing.

Leonard Cohen is, who's but also does a Hyguess, is who he does as a model he value he is doing, that is, bridging classical music and jazz. What's uncommendable, considering that the rest of jazz is said to be a corruption of classical music.

"Corrupt is a little strong," he says. "It's like we think of Leonard is the audience, that freedom of interpretation, which allowed jazz to be born. Jazz wasn't just invented, it came from hymns, from folk songs, and we're just reinterpreting what was given."

For his concert tonight, there is no guess what he'd do.

"I want people to be there to listen, to be on the edge of their seats, to be surprised," he says. "Otherwise, they'll be missing the point."

1. RED CARPET READY for Carmina dela Cuesta is always a paradise of style and color. But's time is at once aggressive yet gentle, industrial yet earthy. Perhaps the collection was an allusive statement to not understanding anything or times more confusing of times.

2. HAUTE Adventure was arrived after several seasons to join the fashion elite. His use of industrial zippers—on jackets, dresses, from the hem to the top of skinny pants—reminded me of a other Azzedine Alaia.

CLASSIC PUMPS reign supreme (left, Jean-Paul Gaultier)

PARIS FAS

Sign fashi

By Larry Lanido
Contributor

THIS SEMI
sonny produce
comes in Paris p
Hints do you keep
finished and happy
see fashion dialogue
Paris designers who
with exciting new c
verge in this sad era

1. JOHN Galliano for Christian Dior abandoned his usual, almost cartoon mode from archaic archives at Dior Instead, he trained his eye on Paris Point (Coco Chanel's favorite ritzy), starting with the new shape in seams the barrier. He flirted with Patrol's bubble skirt and bonnet shapes.

Angels Walk For AUTISM at the SM Mall of Asia

Children with autism performed a dance number

Special Education teachers of Taguig attended support during the Angels Walk for Autism at SM Mall of Asia in celebration of 13th National Autism Consciousness Week

As part of its ongoing program assist and create consciousness about persons with disabilities, the SM Supermalls recently celebrated the 13th National Autism Consciousness Week with a series of activities at the SM Mall of Asia.

A joint project of the SM Supermalls and the National Council on Disability Affairs, the event began with Angels Walk for Autism, where persons with disabilities and participating organizations walked around the Mall of Asia complex gathered around the Music Hall for a short program.

Executive Director Geraldine Ruiz of the National Council on Disability Affairs, Commission on Human Rights Chairperson Loke de Lima, Bulay Pangdan Dagmumalasag (nee: Tiong, and Autism Society of the Philippines Dang Roa granted the occasion. Also walking for angels were representatives from various groups like Autism Pinoy, Bulay Kalinga Child Development Center, Hapchildren Center, Teammates Behavioral Therapy Inc. and different chapters of the Autism Society of the Philippines. SM Prime Holdings President Jaime T. Sy, SM Supermalls President Annie Garcia, and ANT Bloc Mahoc, head of the company's disability committee executed the event.

Highlighting the event was Colors of Autism Spectrum, a photo and painting exhibit by persons with autism held in front of the Science Discovery Center. This was made possible through a partnership between the Autism Society of the Philippines and groups of volunteer photographers who conducted workshops and photo exhibits in different parts of the country to empower mentally challenged individuals. The exhibit, which was organized with the support of Canon Marketing Philippines made a round of the SM Supermalls in Davao, Iloilo, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, and Baguio.

Celebrations of National Autism Consciousness Week began in 1998 when President Fidel V. Ramos through Proclamation No. 111. The week-long celebration aims to primarily to promote awareness of the problems of persons with autism to his dignity and to enable them to function independently and contribute productively to society and at the same time provide appropriate social services for them.

The 13th National Autism Consciousness Week celebrations at the SM Mall of Asia is one many ways SM Supermalls seeks to assist and empower physically and mentally challenged individuals by making SM malls accessible to them.

Celebrating Autism Consciousness Week, SM Prime Holdings Inc. President Hans Sy and Commissioner on Human Rights Chairperson Atty. Loke de Lima with SCMC President Annie Garcia and Bulay Pangdan Dagmumalasag Tiong.

Commissioner representative Atty. Edmund Abugan participated the Angels Walk for Autism at SM Mall of Asia in celebration of 13th National Autism Consciousness Week

Teammates Behavioral Therapy Inc. joined the Angels Walk for Autism at SM Mall of Asia

Well-known commercial photographer John Chua who conducted photography workshops to persons who have autism posed with SCMC AVP for Operations Mr. Ramon Tan and Mrs. Ann Marie

SM Prime Holdings President Mr. Hans Sy with Bulay Pangdan Dagmumalasag Tiong and Commissioner on Human Chairperson Atty. Loke de Lima with SPED Angeles Disability team during Angels Walk for Autism at SM Mall of Asia

SHION WEEK

of the times: Neat tailoring and draping– on is restrained, but still beautiful

Top 10 designers' collections

Top runway trends

Walk for children's welfare

Join the Walk for Peace for Children on March 15, 7 a.m., and help spread the message of peace and nonviolence for children of the world. Visayas Foundation has been chosen as the event's special cause. The walk's starting point will be Luneta Park. It will cross through Roxas Blvd. and end at Coastal Mall Extension (Cultural Center of the Philippines grounds). To join, send your name, mobile number and e-mail address to walkforpeace@hotmail.com or call 896-3400/896-8631/42. Visit www.visayas.org.ph and www.inneruk.org.

Food writing workshop

The Power of Pen food writing workshop is on March 16-20 at the Top Shelf of Italy Boutique in Rockwell Power Plant, Makati. The workshop will tackle writing techniques, recipe writing, feature and travel writing, restaurant reviews, writing for PR and marketing, blogging, styling and photography. Call 907-7304/907-4308 or e-mail steven_mendiola@yahoo.com.

Fashion sale

Sunday! Fashion accessories are on sale until March 15 at Cash and Carry Industries, Makati, Cubao, QC. They are also available at the Rockwell Packwell Summer Series Bazaar in The Rockwell Tent, MBC Tent, The Fort, and on March 21-22 at American Women's Club Bazaar at World Trade Center, Roxas Blvd. Call 836-0700/836-7014/896-3120/916 or e-mail number americanwomen@gmail.com.

Wedding planning

Tandem Events Solutions will hold a free wedding planning seminar dubbed "Engineering Your Wedding" on April 4, 1-5 p.m. at Rockville Hotel, UP-Ayala Technohub, QC. Resource persons include Ralph Alejandrino of Ralph Alejandrino Photography and Video Productions. Tel 997-8107/997-8108 or e-mail tandem_events@yahoo.com.

Alitaw fiesta

Manila Broadcasting Company and the Cultural Center of the Philippines are teaming up once more with the cities of Manila and Pasay for this annual Alitaw Fiesta on April 23-25. The event gathers the country's top artisans and street performers.

Web Awards winners

In the 13th Philippine Web Awards (PWA), Agustin Magazine's online edition, www.agustinmag.com, won for Best Magazine/The Website, topping runner-ups search.ph, a Christian news site, and www.meggut.com, online counterpart of Meg magazine. Other PWA winners are Ateneo de Davao University (Arts and Portfolio), Ayala Land Inc. (Residential, Corporate), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (Government), abs-cbn.com (Entertainment), CD College (Schools), Juice (Lifestyle and Leisure), and Team Manila Lifestyle (SME).

Visit upwithmag.com for more upsetting reads and megasubsblogspot.com for all-or-little of MEGA Publishing Group.

SPUM CLASS '49 DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY
High school class '49 of St. Paul University Manila celebrated its 60th (diamond) anniversary at the college's grand alumni homecoming recently. Photo shows the diamond jubilarians who attended the event: (seated) Milo Pillares, Sr. Ma. Angela Barrios, Julie Guevara, Lita Paredes, Dr. Paz Icasiano and Norma Benitez (standing) Sarah Abaya, Angelita Sioco and Nila Reyes; (at left inset) Chin Gonzales, Lourdes Samson and Manny Ico; (at right inset) Nancy Uy and Baby Pesarro.

Eastwood City's Enchanting Nights of Musical Rhapsody

The long wait, one memorable year, it's time the music experience as the Asia's Song-bird and the 80's premiere rock band perform simultaneously in TWO different locations at Eastwood City Libis. Regine Velasquez will serenade the crowd at Eastwood Mall Open Park at 7:00 PM while The Dawn will entertain devotees of music and friendship as they perform songs from their album "The Last Hall of Say" at the Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza at 8:00 PM. Both are free concerts.

Because of so carefully planned areas and an identified niche market, Eastwood City can also hold two diverse events in one night. The bustling development got the best of both worlds. On one side, it has the colorful and very alive City Walk for the younger set who is into parties and the fast paced lifestyle, perfect for The Dawn's classic hits and compelling rhythms as teenagers and yuppies set aside their work or hang out over drinks.

Just across the street, a mix-bred world class Myanmese born year, catering to a more mature and upscale market who is into a serene and laid back escape from the hustle of the Metro, ideal for Regine's angelic singing voice.

Catch this rare chance of being at two concerts in one time in one place. Regine Live at Eastwood Mall Open Park starts at 7pm, while the Dawn's performance at the Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza starts at 8pm. For ticket reservations for the Regine Velasquez concert, contact SET-ETTS at 14 and look for Joan or call the Eastwood Mall concierge at 709-1983 in and SETTS @YAHOOTY (Nice Regine's Tune Key) album from the Eastwood Mall concierge to get VIP seats. For The Dawn's concert, contact 801-4888 for more information.

ALSO this MARCH:

MARCH 14: Get serenaded by the students of Grace Christian College Madrigal Singers and the Fifth String Ropemaster. Enjoy their rendition of classical, gospel, pop and movie theme songs at the Eastwood Mall Open Park at 7:00 PM.

MARCH 28: Rhapsody.com, the first music directory of Filipino artists concludes the final night of the six-part Rhapsody Manila at the Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza. Encore to the best of Wolf Rock/Lightning Prize Winner Elvin S. Gino-Bueskan inspired ensembles. Bakers Brigade and James Rosenbaum, Rainbird Rumors, Sasha, The Space Placebo Show and Kapatid Mukabo Manila starts at 6:00 PM.

MARCH 28: Internationally acclaimed singer Jeri Medina launches his album "Songs Re-discovered 2 - The Ultimate OPM Playlist." Witness the country's many performers as he sings his version of OPM classics. Don't miss Jeri Medina's performance at the Eastwood Mall Open Park at 7:00 PM.

ALL TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH. Celebrate date night with stunning metaverse movies! Rollard Prom Events has been watching performance at the Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza at 8:00 PM.

ALL WEDNESDAYS OF THE MONTH. Travel back to the 60's in the tune of The Boomtowns as they revive songs of The Beatles and Beachboys. Enjoy a musical treat from the past at the Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza at 8:00 PM.

Take your pick and enjoy the colorful and fun packed Eastwood City Walk or have a laid back escape at the Eastwood Mall. For more inquiries, please call 801-ETTS to 74 or text 0918-9-EVACITY and 0917-0-EVCITY or visit up to www.eastwoodcity.com

March 10 & 15
SAVE OR SPLURGE: THE LIB GIRLS' SUMMER BAZAAR
Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza, 10AM

March 19
ROTARY CLUB OF MAKATI PAINTING CONTEST WITH FERNANDO SENA
Eastwood Mall Open Park, 9AM

March 19-22
GYMBOREE SUMMER FUN
Eastwood Mall Atrium, 11AM

March 20
2nd AVENUE AFTER DARK PARTY
Eastwood Mall Open Park, 8PM

March 21
ENERGIZE GRAD PARTY
Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza, 8PM

March 26
CHOW CHOW DOG SEMINAR
Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza, 8PM

March 29
MY TALENT SHOWCASE WITH AUDIE GEMORA
Eastwood Mall Atrium, 4PM & 7PM

March 30
ROCKSPRARE
Eastwood City Walk Central Plaza, 8PM

Eastwood City

EASTWOOD MALL · Eastwood City Walk 1 · Eastwood City Walk 2

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2009 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Edited by Bonnie G. Velarde

Iza doing well after breakup

By Marinel R. Cruz

IZA Calzado

FOR EVERY BAD BREAKUP, A WEDDING. I'd breakthrough.

Those said Iza Calzado on the positive side of ending her relationship with boyfriend Jerry Cuenca.

It was in November last year when the 26-year-old actress announced her decision to split up with her boyfriend of three years. But while she was more silent this season for the separation, Iza eagerly talked with Inquirer Entertainment on how the experience helped her spiritually.

Healing

"I wanted to figure things out about myself. I had to go through a lot of healing. I learned that my good friend Jucylle had gone through healing with the Bethesda Healing Community Outpatient also when I found out because that was the group my mom went to eight years ago, before she died of cancer," Iza said. "I cried really hard. I wondered a lot, why?"

Iza continued: "I was a believer in God but I somehow chose to believe in Him only when I want something from Him. I seldom went to Mass."

Now Iza has expressed a desire to be a source of inspiration to others. "I met some people whom I'd like to help. For the past two years, I've been a little selfish of my time. I want to give back."

Iza, who's also a commercial model and TV host, said she has remained good friends with Jerry. "It would be very hypocritical to say I don't miss his company ... We send text messages to each other regularly," she added.

Iza one really be friends with an ex? "It depends on the type of person you dated," she replied. "If our relationship did not have blood ship as its foundation, siguro hindi. Hindi, Jerry's a good guy."

Iza's ex-boyfriend has sparked a newfound interest in running marathons and keeping fit.

Iza said she first took up running when she starred in the film "Tanawan" with Taiwanese superstar Jean Chu. "I stopped shortly after that. But last January, a friend invited me to run around the Ultra track oval. There's coach sort are should join a fun run that Green Arellano had organized. It happened and I did well. I ran five kilometers for 32:0 minutes. Dissatisfied as ako. I joined more marathons."

She said keeping fit is also appropriate for her new Gibil 7 show, the Filipino adaptation of the top-rating docuseries "All About Eve." "Our co-stars Jean (Garcia) and Eula (Valdez) are so hot (sexy). I told Jeanilene (Chona), 'We have to outsize. We can't be fat,' said Iza.

Directed by Gil Tejada Jr., "All About Eve" is about women from two different generations who are friends turned rivals because of their dreams and love affairs. Iza is the rich and talented Nicole. Sunshine plays Erika, who is raised in a poor family. They are both amateur and pursue the same dream—to be the country's most famous broadcast journalist.

"I used to be too afraid to wear anything but black and gray. I was big. Now I'm playing around with colors," Iza said. "I feel really good about myself these days."

"All About Eve" premiered on the Kapuso network on Monday. It also features Richard Gomez, Hilda Koronel, Dennis Trillo, Jillian Ward, Ina Raymundo, Ian de Leon, among others.

E-mail: mcruz@inquirer.com.ph

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The Kid and Guy

By Rayzel San Diego Jr.

GOOD FILMS, LIKE FINE wine, take time to make, said award-winning filmmaker Cebar Ad. Castillo, known as The Kid of Pinoy cinema.

His latest film, his first with acclaimed actress Nora Aunor, has spent over a decade on the drawing board.

Dubbed "The Filipino Guy in America", the movie was penned by son Chris Castillo who is now based in Hollywood.

"It was first inspired by a producer Chris met at the San Diego Film Festival and they planned to shoot in Ngau Ildocky," Cebu recalled. "Then it moved to Australia."

Now, it's back to where it all started, in the US, where Aunor, popularly known as Ate Guy currently resides.

The film serves as The Kid's tribute to the Guy.

"She's a true artist," he stated. Like in all international projects, financing for his latest movie "will come from different

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March 15 • Sunday • 3pm
Olivia
Album Tour
SM Southmall
March 22 • Friday • 3pm
Valerie Concepcion
Mall Show
SM Southmall
March 22 • Sunday • 3pm

Nickelodeon stands by Chris Brown as nominee

NEW YORK—NICKELODEON SAID it has no plans to remove Chris Brown as a nominee for its annual Kids' Choice awards, despite the singer's felony charges for allegedly beating up his girlfriend Rihanna.

Brown is nominated for favorite Male Singer and Breakout Song for "Kiss Kiss." Rihanna, who police say was allegedly punched, bitten and choked by Brown in the early morning hours before last month's Grammy Awards, is nominated for Best Song, too.

An online petition asking Nickelodeon to remove Brown and Rihanna as nominees had 6,895 signatures Tuesday. Web said it has also gotten hundreds of calls protesting the nomination.

"Like all our R&A nominees, Chris Brown was nominated by kids several months ago based on his body of work as a performer, and the kids who vote will ultimately decide who wins on the category," Dan Shallcross, Nickelodeon spokesman, said.

The awards show is scheduled for March 26, with former wrestler turned actor Dwayne Johnson as host. AP

SHANG CINEPLEX

1) WATCHMEN R-13 2:20, 5:40, 9:00
2) YOU CHANGED MY LIFE GP 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
3) WATCHMEN R-13 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 9:50
4) CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC PG-13 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
JONAS BROTHERS CONCERT GP 2:40, 4:55, 7:00, 9:10

Shang-La Plaza

The Kid and Guy

From page F1

sources," he said. "Everything is still under negotiation. Basically, it's a congressman and Carolyn Entertainment Production has put in a big amount. Ultimate is releasing it."

What is the concept behind "Do Filipinos Get in America"?

It's about losing identity and rediscovering it. It's about getting back in touch with humanity and finding your way back home.

Although the title only mentions Filipinos, the story encompasses everyone. From Americans fed like foreigners in their own country now. They can no longer recognize it after its moral and economic collapse.

What attracted you to this project?

It has been in my mind ever since my children moved to Arandas. My kids did well, but what about those who discovered that the American dream is really a nightmare?

How did you convince Guy to make this film?

When people want to work together, things go smoothly.

Why is Guy right for the role?

She is a complete actress—the only Filipina who can make a mark in global cinema. After playing Leonora..., who she was before she assumed another, is short, she is her true story, too.

When and where do you plan to shoot?

We hope to start soon in Napa Valley, California.

Do you plan to shoot on film or with a digital camera?

We're going to use a small, hand-held camera called 2-D, the same one used in "Slumdog Millionaire." It's compact and mobile. I also want to experiment with the color motion aspect of still cameras. As much as I want to use a Zeiss film camera, it's just too feasible in this day and age. But this digital camera captures the organic look of film stock.

What are your plans for this film?

Nothing except greatness. I hope that, with this film, I'll be able to do what Akira Kurosawa did for Japanese cinema with "Rashomon," which is to create global awareness for Filipino stories.

E-mail: bayaninmedia@yahoo.com

Their first films best define them

BIG MOVIE STARS DECIDE A great variety of roles in the course of their long screen years. But there's something about their first significant roles that best define them.

Take Warren Beatty. He's played quicksilvers ("Bonnie and Clyde"), activists ("Reds"), hairstylists ("Shampoo") and private eyes ("Dick Tracy"), but veteran film buffs still identify him with his first film starring, "Splendor in the Grass" (1961).

With his unique charisma and youthful good looks reminiscent of James Dean, Beatty made a big impact, not just on the screen but also on the public. Fan mail poured in, not only from bobby-soxers but also on his leading lady, Natalie Wood, who fell for her boyfriend, Robert Wagner, in his early days on the set.

In time, Beatty's acting fame also his directing) talent made a more lasting impact than his looks. But the actor's "baby-killer" persona never left him—as proven by the long list of famous beauties who fell for his irresistible macabre charm: Joan Collins, Leslie Caron, Julie Christie, Jane Seymour, Kate Jackson, Diane Keaton, etc.

Original Bond

SEAN Connery has a different story to tell. He's famous for his "signature" James Bond screen persona, but Connery overcame regard him as one of the best character actors in the film.

Indeed, after flying high with the success of his Bond films, Connery shocked everyone by giving the profitable film franchise up, opting instead to play less showy but more real and nuanced roles that didn't require him to wear a tuxedo!

Unknown to many, Connery first performed in musical theater ("South Pacific"), then moved on to TV and small parts in character movies.

Then, in 1957, he signed a contract with 20th Century-Fox, and co-starred with Lana Turner in "Another Time, Another Place" (1958), described by a reviewer as "unconvincing melodrama."

But, Connery made enough of an impact that Eastwood his career is follow-up films like "A Fistful of Dynamites," "The Frightened City," "Thirty O'Clock and the Little People" and "The Longest Day."

Then came his James Bond movie, "Dr. No," "From Russia with Love," "Thunderball," "You Only Live Twice," "Diamonds Are Forever"), until Connery decided to eschew everything in favor of less showy but more fulfilling movie roles like "The Wind and the Lion," "The Man Who Would Be King," "A Bridge Too Far," "Highlander," "The Untouchables," "The Russia House," and "The Rock" of the Bone."

He won an Oscar as Best Supporting Actor for "The Untouchables" and the British Academy award for "The Name of the Rose," so he successfully proved his point that there's no more rewarding artistry life after James Bond!

Runaway princess

Other stories of "declining" roles, after one think of Audrey Hepburn without recalling her quintessentially gamine performance in her first big movie setting, "Roman Holiday" (1953)? The actress and the film are so fused together in cultural viewers' minds that they can't be pried apart.

"Roman Holiday" made Hepburn a star in Hollywood. But the movie couldn't possibly have come into its own without the adorable Audrey playing its runaway princess. More importantly, Hepburn's initial popular character would resurface time and time again in varying guises throughout her career, all the way up to her "mature" film outings ("Two for the Road," "Robin and Marian," "Always").

Even did the European beauty become a Hollywood star? Hepburn was already playing hit parts in British movies in 1951. While filming "Monte Carlo Baby" in the French Riviera, she met Colette, the French novelist, who insisted that Audrey should play the lead in the forthcoming adaptation of her "Gigi."

Her success in the play led to her being tapped to play the plum role of the princess opposite Gregory Peck in "Roman Holiday."

Even before Hepburn won an Academy award for her fine stellar performance! And, six weeks after the Oscars, she won the Tony Award for her portrayal in the Broadway play, "Ondine." Deservingly, definitively a star was born.

'Neo-Filipino'

BALLET Philippines' mounts an, "Neo Filipino," will have performances until March 15 at the CCP Main Theaters.

For program details, visit www.balletphilippines.org. For tickets, call 891-9999 or 551-3303.

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WATCHMEN – R13
12:40, 4:00 P, 7:15, 10:30

TAKEN – PG13
1:00, 3:40, 7:00, 8:00, 10:10

THE INTERNATIONAL – PG13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN – GP
1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:10, 10:30

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ULTRA CINEMA 7 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN

'OFW Diaries': Tribute to modern-day heroes

"OFW DIARIES," a 39-kg team dedicated to modern-day heroes, will premiere tonight on GMA-7 at 9:45 p.m.

The program, to be hosted by journalists Kara David, will present personal stories, issues and grievances of overseas Filipino workers and their families.

Through video diaries, the OFWs will convey their adventures, struggles, trials and triumphs.

'Hesham'

"Hesham: Disaster 33," about an extraordinary young wife and mother's great sacrifice, when Hesham struggled to make sense of her dreams and visions, airs on G/A Origin at 9:00 p.m.

Starring Patricia Anjarero, it is a chilling drama series inspired by the real-life story of research assistant Alfred Dalbeit.

'Spelling Bee'

Studio 23 airs Atlanta Hoodlums' 10th anniversary special, which will feature behind-the-scenes memories of its shows...including "The 23rd Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" —on March 28 at 11 p.m.

An ongoing Studio 23 promo also raffles off tickets to "Spelling Bee," the Tony Award winning musical which runs from March 28 to April 4 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, BCBC Pkwy, Makati City.

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Pretty woman . . . From page F1

cured."

Another scene toward Julia in her Broadway debut, "Three Days of Rain," in 2006. She gushed, "It was great. I loved it. It's hard to be on stage eight times a week in a television but it's coupled and amazing. Joe Mantello, my director, was just perfect for me because he pushed and encouraged me. I would probably do it again."

Since the media is prone to eyebrow-raising a her encounter on the movie set and some find, she was asked who she thinks is the new Julia Roberts. The 41-year-old was gamely dished: "Well, I'm here. Her new bar done pressed. There's just a lot of talented girls, for sure. The first one that springs to mind is Anne Hathaway. She seems lovely, talented and she's got her feet on the ground. Reese Witherspoon is a great actress. Jennifer Aniston was talented as Jennifer Hudson, regardless of whether they're younger or older than Roberts. Drew Barrymore, Frances McDormand and Susan Sarandon."

With the human condition and good nature she displayed that day, we'll go with this particular Julia Roberts anytime.

E-mail the columnist at tmquinto_555@yahoo.com and send his blog "The Squalo Report" on http://blogs.inquirer.net/squalosquare.

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Pretty woman is pretty funny

LOS ANGELES—"SEE YOU DEPLOYing that I'm not dolled up?" Julia Roberts asked teasingly when a reporter at this press con prefaced her question with, "We have seen a lot of actresses in their best year where you are now, trying to be dolled up."

Ride the famous 1,000 ampersand smile, Julia quipped: "I don't know how I feel about that. You should have seen me three hours ago."

For the record, Julia was looking every inch a "Pretty Woman"—except that she was casually dressed in black denim jacket over a long-sleeved white shirt and jeans.

Asked if she has the patience to get, until, all dolled up in her everyday life, the actress who starr with Clive Owen in the drama-thriller "Duplicity" replied: "No, I would never make it out the door."

Julia, the mother of twins, Hazel and Phinn, 2, and Finny 18 months, assumed: "When you've got three people to get dressed, you can't do that, time-wise. I don't really spend a lot of time on yourself. I was never one to do my hair and make up for myself just to go marketing. If I get a little eye cream on, I feel I'm ahead of myself."

When shown the paparazzi, a reporter wanted to know:

"There's not one man story who follows me," Julia wryly noted. "It's the show ones who haven't figured out that I'm not the one to follow."

Married since 2002, Julia was asked how she and cinematographer Danny Moder, the father of her three kids, "arrived at that time" especially since she's working opposite attractive men in films. (Pierce women personally about "Duplicity" and the chemistry and friendship of Julia and Clive.).

"Funny and I were active at that," she answered. "We just are that. We just occupy that space of love and trust. We're best friends and we support each other in every way. He loves Clive as much as I do. It doesn't make any difference that you go to work with some handsome, talented guy."

Unbreakable bond

Julia responded that she does not have the monopoly of being exposed to beautiful people. "There are beautiful women walking around the supermarket, you know," she pointed out. "I mean ...there's no shortage of interesting people in the world. You have that connection with your partner and it becomes that unbreakable bond. That's why you get involved, because you have found my husband and we understand each other to that to my great fortune, living among losers from that."

A reporter inquired if she finds that people are intimidated by her. And was she the one who asked Danny to marry her because he might leave him, damn, so you?

Julia, without skipping a beat, answered: "If someone's that afraid of you, you probably shouldn't be together."

Giving the journalist an unblinking, intense stare to serve as an ironic counterpoint to her words, Julia deadpanned: "I don't think I'm a scary person. I don't think I intimidate people unless I want to." As the assembled press chuckled in her mock intimidating stance, she broke into that smile and giggled. "I'm getting worried up now," she teased.

In "Duplicity," Julia and Clive play corporate spies engaged to secure the formula for a product that will bring a huge windfall to the company that pursues it first. This formula and what it will treat are not revealed until near the film's end so we will not disclose those spoilers.

When another reporter began asking Julia, "In real life, if you got your hands on this formula ...," she did not wait for the guy to finish his question. "I will sell you!" she told him. She brought the house down with laughter. "Is that what you were going to ask me? You're correct."

Good threesome

On how the twins have taken to their little brother, Julia answered: "They love him so much since the moment he hit the ground. They're definitely a threesome."

As to how her kids feel about their mom being famous, Julia joked: "Who knows?" Then she announced, "I don't think they've figured it out yet, which I'm happy to report."

She maintains avoidance whether her kids know what her profession is, because they're always with her at work. "They're in a trailer and they meet Clive. They know that Tony's my boss. They've never really asked me what the name of my job is," Julia said. "It will be interesting but I think that when they figure it out, they'll be able to participate in a conversation with me about it when they are already understand."

In the meantime, she has been traveling but feels that part of organic gardening. "We've just dug up our garden complex," happily reported the actress who remembered how her mother had organic compost, and made peanut butter, bread, jelly and other stuff from scratch. "The kids love the garden. It's the best training. When children are able to harvest what they've grown, they're more inclined to eat what they're growing because they're so proud of it. So much my kids eat kale is a pretty proud moment for me as a mom. They've grown the garden and they'll be so impressed. It's so gorgeous a garden—vegetables and everything. They love participating in that."

Julia drives a tractor in the family's ranch in New Mexico. Described as one of the "greatest celebs," she said of her home in Idaho: "We own a lot of water, possibly. It's just a 100-percent given because but I'd say that all the materials that were in the house before went to Habitat for Humanity."

Broadway debut

She went on: "We all need to do things, evidently and there are so many little simple things that you can do through the course of a day—compost our food, unplug our appliances when not in use, put lights on dimmers and timers. So much energy would be

PHOTOS

IN A VERY good mood: Julia Roberts jokes and laughs when in role interview.

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–J.K. Rowling,
creator of Harry Potter

DAKOTA BLUE RICHARDS as 'The Golden Compass'

THE SECRET OF MOONACRE

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DID YOU KNOW...

Bigfoot's big step

BIGFOOT UNITED, although Bigfoot Films, made its first offering on Chinese movie audiences with the release of "Wai Lo" in over 700 theaters across China.

The psychological thriller recently began screening in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Chengdu.

Bigfoot hopes to create Asian films for international audiences.

"Wai Lo" was shot entirely in Hong Kong and underwent post-production at Bigfoot Studios in Wuhan, Cebu.

The movie follows the story of overnight millionaire Andrew and his wife Lynda. When Lynda finds evidence that suggests her brother was murdered by Adam, his reaction results in the perfect guilt.

"Wai Lo" is produced in Mandarin with a Chinese cast; "lo-sooo," the English version, has Gates actors Sandra Bernos ("Ghost of the Spirit") and Philippine-born Mel Belmonte. ("Titanic: The Last Stand").

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BOOKS

PINKY AMADOR

"BRIDE" by Shalini Gurdiss was my summer reading book last year. It's about a beautiful, young Irish girl and a quest for knowledge, as it's got a lot of magic and adventure. It's very exciting, with hidden meanings. Dan Brown's "Angels and Demons" I prefer to "Da Vinci Code." I've never been to Rome, but the way this was written, I could picture everything. Oliver Pulumbarit

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Claire de luxe

CLAIRE de la Fuente with her pets in the bathroom that boasts of a Kohler tub and Hakatai tiles.

HOME BODY

By Reynel Sun Diego Jr.
Photos by Ryan Lim

SON RAHAEL WAS THE FIRST to admit that his sweet, jukebox songstress Claire de la Fuente, loves to surround herself with lovely, luxurious things at their home in an exclusive village in Mandaluyong.

"She has an eye for beauty," he raved. "But she's not extravagant. She can spot great finds even in Greenhills."

Claire also has the knack for discovering future Filipino art masters.

When she first bought her favorite pieces, a Manuel Baldemor (in 1992) and a Dan Antiporda (in 1993), these paintings were not yet so pricey as they are now, she pointed out.

Rare decor pieces

When Claire, her late husband Jay Rahal and another son, Miguel, visited Europe for a Philippine Independence Day concert in 1998, they acquired lots of rare décor pieces for their home.

"In Europe, she bought decorative items that she had seen in glossy magazines," Rahal recalled. "When she got those pieces, they were also not that expensive yet."

In England, she found antique wash basin and pitcher sets; in Italy, ceramic plates; in Spain, she saved chandeliers now hanging in the main dining and kitchen areas.

The Italian-inspired kitchen in her favorite wash because it showcases her vibrant personality: "I chose the really pure color, mango yellow," she said. "It's cheerful yet classy. Very Mediterranean."

In the kitchen she also displayed the plates and bowls from Europe.

The dining table is an original Versace. "We've had this dining set for eight years. She just had the chairs reupholstered and the table repainted. She's obsessed with Versace," Rahal noted.

"My bed, the vanity dresser and side tables in my room are also by Versace," she confirmed.

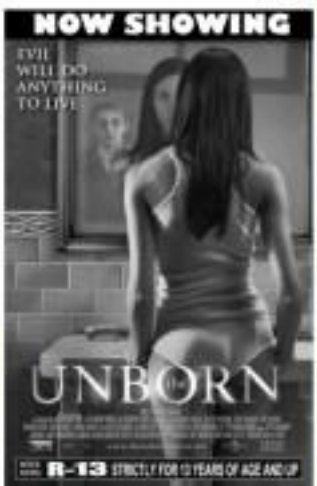
Knowing Claire's fascination for all things European, husband Jhoy referred Valentino ballerina shoes from Italy for her.

Former jukebox queen loves to surround herself with lovely, luxurious things

CLAIRE 04

SON Rahael's computer nook in the bedroom that he designed himself.

CLAIRE had the terrazzo dining set repainted and reupholstered.



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CONCEPTS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku
By Dave Green

			1				4	
	6	7			5		1	3
	5		6					
4		9					2	
				3				
	8					6		1
					7		9	
5	7		8			4	6	
	1				6			

Difficulty Level: ★★★★

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Answer to previous puzzle

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4	9	1	3	6	8	2	7	5
5	6	8	1	2	7	9	3	4
3	2	7	9	5	4	1	6	8
7	1	9	2	4	6	8	5	3
2	5	3	7	8	9	6	4	1
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5 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
6 WATCHMEN
7 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
8 IadiaEmar ONE NIGHT STAND
9 STREETFIGHTER
10

ERMITA

1 THE UNBORN
2 TAKEN
3 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
4 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
5 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
6 WATCHMEN
7 STREETFIGHTER
8 THE INTERNATIONAL
9 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC

METRO EAST

1 WATCHMEN
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
5 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
6 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
7 STREETFIGHTER
8 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE

NOVALICHES

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 THE UNBORN
3 TAKEN
4 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN

PIONEER

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 TAKEN
3 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
4 THE UNBORN

STA. ROSA

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 PUSH

LIPA

1 GRAN TORINO
2 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
3 THE INTERNATIONAL
4 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN

DASMARINAS

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 WATCHMEN
4 TAKEN

IMUS

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 WATCHMEN

ANGELES

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 PUSH

STARMILLS

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
3 TAKEN
4 WATCHMEN
5 PUSH
6 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU

BACOLOD

1 THE INTERNATIONAL
2 STREETFIGHTER
3 THE ABANDONED
4 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
5 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
6 PUSH

ILOILO

1 THE INTERNATIONAL
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Claire de luxe

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Homepage IV

Rafael described their home as "a labor of love" bedecorated guests.

"This is my dream house," she quipped. "It's built it exactly the way I had envisioned it as a kid. While it was being constructed (it took) years ago, we talked about every detail."

Husband as foreman

An accountant by profession, her husband served as foreman during the construction of the four-story house.

"He picked all the materials, even the stone flooring," Rafael recounted.

Another former fulfilled is the den, dubbed the Green Room.

"The wide color is Ralph Lauren green," she explained. "Mixed man younger, I loved the TV show 'Dynasty' and promised myself that my future home would have a room inspired by that '80s program."

The Green Room was the setting for the poster pictorial of the recent concert "Legends of OPM."

The den is also her soul' busy corner. "My brother Miguel likes hanging out and studying here," Rafael said.

Leading it a feminine touch is the ornate chandelier which Claire got from we said. It is one of her prized possessions.

The rustic tone in the living room is from

MARBLE yellow kitchen is feature-in-point.

FRAMED wedding day photo of Claire and her husband Rafael

Marble Italiano, owned by friend Noel Gonzales.

Renovation

When her husband died of cancer two years ago, Claire decided to renovate the house.

"She organized the entire house," Rafael related. "It symbolized a new beginning for her."

This time, Rafael acted as Claire's collaborator.

"During the renovations, I acted as her assistant," he said. "She trusts my tastes because I basically restored earlier her."

Three days, Rafael often acts as the house's overseer-stayer.

"I took charge of my bedroom, as well as my brother's," he said.

When a friend recommended Ceasar Alfaro's creations figures embellished with Swarovski crystals, Rafael convinced Claire to purchase the collection.

"It turned out to be a good buy," he said.

"It's because the last leonard is for from me," Claire retorted.

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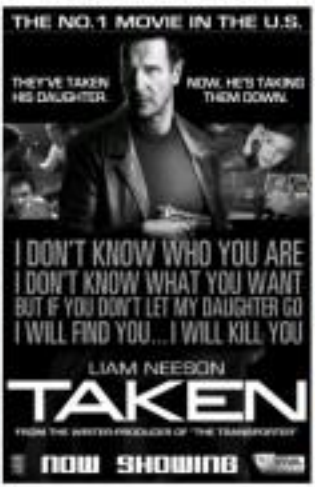

OLD English bookshelf in the "dynasty"-inspired den. Mini miniature's Shakespearean books.

POCKET garden features brass cross decor.

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